

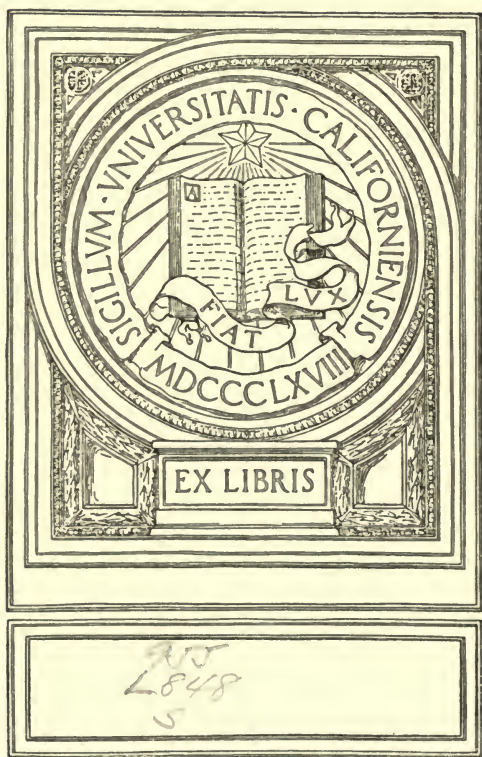


SIXTY
JANE



BY JOHN
LUTHER
LONG









SIXTY JANE





“ And then, at the very last, to put each piece away in
rose-leaves or violets.”

SIXTY JANE

AND THE STRIKE ON THE SCHLAFE-
PLATZ RAILROAD ❀ "OUR ANCHEL" ❀
THE LADY AND HER SOUL ❀ THE
BEAUTIFUL GRAVEYARD ❀ LUCKY
JIM ❀ THE OUTRAGEOUS MISS DAWN-
DREAM ❀ THE LITTLE HOUSE IN
THE LITTLE STREET WHERE THE
SUN NEVER CAME ❀ THE ATONEMENT

BY

JOHN LUTHER LONG

AUTHOR OF "MADAME BUTTERFLY," "PRINCE OF
ILLUSION," "NAUGHTY NAN," ETC.



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THESE ARE
THAT YOU MAY NOT HEIN-
OUSLY FORGET THE LITTLE
JOYS AND THE VAST SORROWS
OF THOSE WHOM YOU SHALL
HAVE ALWAYS WITH YOU
THE POOR

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SIXTY JANE



SIXTY JANE

I

WHEN JANE WENT SHOPPING—LONG AGO

I DID not know then, and I do not know now, why they called her "Sixty Jane." Perhaps because she was always dressed in the things of the period of 1860. At all events, you did not know her, and I saw her only twice. The first was on one of those holiday occasions when she would issue from some unknown habitat in the slums to "go shopping." She did this in the biggest of the big stores, and with quite an empress air—ordering everything, buying nothing. Salespeople found it easier to "sell" her everything she wanted, and then to return her purchases to the shelves.

On these occasions she was sure to be "dressed up." And her toilets were always, as I have said, of the style and pattern of 1860. If her shopping excursions were festival occasions to her, I should have added that they were even more so to the boys who had the felicity to encounter her then. The temptation to make brilliant epigrams concerning the bandbox she invariably carried was not to be resisted.

Her head-gear also lent itself to the encouragement of juvenile humor. It was a turban of apple-green velvet, adorned with flowers and feathers in a profusion out of all proportion to the object they were set to embellish. And it had the look of distress which might have come from having been rained upon, and having been inadvertently sat upon, and of having been lovingly restored. There would be a Zouave jacket of blue with faded gold braid, and a flounced frock, which she invariably carried so as to exhibit the skirt of white beneath. A generous collar with thin ruffles at the edge completed this part of her costume.

All this was supported by a hoop-skirt which gave the boys more pleasure than any other article of her attire. For they would run back and forth to tilt this, with elaborate evidence of accident. Then would be disclosed to the inactive participants a pair of Congress gaiters, out of the relaxed, calyx-like tops of which started a pair of ghostly ankles.

So it was that on these holiday occasions the boys would pelt her handbox, tilt her hoop-skirt, make humorous remarks about her turban, and "worry" her in the way boys know so well, until she turned and—smiled!

Then, somehow, they would slink away and be sorry—only, I dare say, to do it again. But one of them at least did not for days forget the great brown eyes he had seen, and the something in them which he knows now was hunger—weariness; nor the huge mass of copperish hair which glorified the silly apple-green turban and its feathers and flowers; nor the

vast sweetness he felt—but could not otherwise account for. For Sixty Jane was young then, and had not been Sixty Jane long.

And I—for you perceive that I was one of the boys who tilted the hoop-skirt, and that I have made you my confessor—did not know then (no one did) that the bandbox held some article of a trousseau which through forty tired years she was never to complete and never to wear, and that when she looked into the faces of men she was mistily seeking a lover who never came, and who never would come, because he was dead; because the lips and the hands and the eyes with which he had told her he adored her—as all men do—were dust.

Do you care for the story of Sixty Jane? It is a very humble one. And if you do not fancy that sort of thing,—the pity, the sorrow, the joy, of the humble,—stop where you are. There is nothing else.

II

WHEN JANE WAS ILL IN SIXTY-ONE

THE second time I saw her was not long after my ordination. It was my “turn” in the Alaska-Street “Settlement.” I fear I was not sufficiently lowly then for exactly that. I still took pride in the fit of my clerical coat and the way my waistcoat buttoned up; and I remember the satisfaction I had in the plain cross of Roman gold which I was permitted to wear.

At dusk on the first Saturday of my service, the maid, answering the door, informed me that I was to go to Alaska Street. Some one was ill there. The call was urgent. The man was at the door and would conduct me. I looked ruefully at my freshly varnished shoes, and was about to change them, when I heard the voice of the messenger. He had been left at the open door.

“‘For inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’”

Not to me. He was repeating it to himself. But it accused me weirdly.

I put on my hat and followed him.

He was an elderly man, stooped and whiskered, and ill clad.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“The doctor’s driver,” he answered.

“What doctor?” I asked again.

“*What* doctor?” he said, and turned to look at me accusingly. He spoke no more until he had brought me to a decrepit tenement—decrepit even for Alaska Street. An old horse and buggy were standing there. He pointed up the stairway which opened like a foul mouth from the outside.

“Up top,” he said. Then, as if I had not understood, “Garret,” he added. “The doctor’s there.”

I had never been in a place quite so bare and squalid. It chilled and depressed me. I think I shivered. Perhaps it was more disgust than cold. The doctor noticed this. He was just going—a stoop-shouldered, pale-eyed, silent old man. He looked at me, from my varnished shoes upward, a little doubtfully, and con-

tinued to wrap his hypodermic instruments in a piece of cotton flannel. I saw that it was worn with much using, and at one place torn.

When this was done he stood up—not straight; he could not have done that—and looked at me again, my face now, more carefully. He was a little kinder then.

“When she wakes,” he said gently, “she will remember. Be good to her. It will be the last time she will need us.”

He went so softly that I scarce knew he had left me alone. But then, in the little moment of reflection which came, I understood why he was simply “the doctor.” I remembered all I had heard of him, and saw that he was threadbare and poor and tired himself—quite like those he served. And then, also, I understood how he comforted the poor as I could not—not unless they should learn to call me “the minister” as they called him “the doctor.”

I turned to the sick woman. Recollection knocked at my brain, and knocked again, and presently I knew that it was Sixty Jane.

She slept lightly; she smiled. There was a coal-oil lamp on a little wooden bracket. By that I stood at the foot of the thing she would have called her bed, and studied her sleeping face. It was Jane. But I was a little boy when I had seen her before, and now I was a man. I could not see the great eyes I remembered, but the smile on her shrunken features seemed quite the same. And the hair which had been sunny then was gray now—at the temples two great waves of white. And yet, somehow, it was very beautiful that

way—even as a pair of dove's wings. One could see that it had been cared for lovingly. My mood was become very gentle, and perhaps I saw her in a fashion quite unreal. I do not know. Certainly she did not now seem anything like the invertebrate subject of our boyish jokes. And those two rich white wings I fancied, in my mood of gentleness, finally, to be more beautiful than the radiant locks I remembered. Just above the bed was a head of Jane done in water-colors,—and she was not at all Sixty Jane then,—and with it, on the same medallion, was another one—a dark young man with a smooth face and somber, serious eyes. The shoulders of a clerical coat of the fashion of many years before showed, and a cross of plain gold something like mine. The hair of the portrait was so long as to curl a little at the ends, and there was a rich dark lock combed before each ear.

I am looking at the portraits as I write. And the one with the brilliant hair seems smiling at me. I am glad even to fancy that.

For you are to know that I lied for her—I, a minister. Yet I am not sorry; there is nothing to repent, for I am sure that God understands.

III

WHEN DAWN BEGAN TO COME TO JANE

WE were quite alone, the crazy woman and I, in the cold and grime of the garret of a tenement. But there

was an unnamable sweetness in it—I could not quite tell why. Perhaps God had given me a little intelligence of what was to come.

She did not wake till the dawn began to come; not in the windows,—no dawn ever shone there,—but in a faint flush far away. Perhaps I had slept a little myself.

If it were so, then I must first have heard her voice in my sleep. It seemed so marvelous for melody that I did not at once credit it to her. I had not heard it on the other occasion when I had seen her. It said softly, yet with pulsing emotion:

“Arthur!”

But as I looked at her the voice no longer seemed strange. For the waking had wrought a transformation in her features which was wondrous. They were brilliant now, and sparkled with a certain glow of immortal youth. Her face smiled upon me, and her hands were outheld. Her eyes had been opened, but now they closed. She spoke with them thus—with softness, and tenderness, and wonder, and joy immeasurable:

“Arthur!”

Then slowly, very slowly, the great eyes opened, and they were as I had seen them long ago. I knew later that she did this to assure herself that she was not dreaming. Only now they were full of strange violet lights, and something with which the violet lights seemed to have to do—sanity, intelligence. And the rosy flush of the dawn reflected from somewhere fixed itself in her face, and she was young again, like the picture, when she had not at all been Sixty Jane.

Then she saw me. I had again moved to the foot of her bed. I saw recollection knock at her misty brain-doors; I saw them open; I saw intelligence, remembrance, flash into the eyes that had so long been vacant. Then she said again:

“Arthur!”

Now it was a breathless interpretation of yearning—when one’s soul yearns. Her arms strained to their utmost toward me.

“Why do you not come to me? Do you not know that I have been ill—dying? Have they not told you? Have they deceived me? Why do you not come to me, Arthur, my love?”

At the last she was whispering so wondrously that I could not have stayed if I would. I moved slowly, uncertainly, to her side.

“Yes,” she whispered; “yes—yes—yes. At first I thought it might still be a part of the dream, but I feel your hand. I never could do that in the dream. And you—will you not take mine? Have you forgotten how?”

She laughed a little and thrust her hands into mine.

Thus I stood an awkward moment. Then she said with archness and reproach:

“Arthur!”

I was about to tell her that I was not Arthur. But the words of the doctor flashed into my head. “Be good to her,” he had said.

“Yes,” I said to the doctor. To her: “What is it you wish?”

“What is it—I *wish*? Do you not know?”

“I do not think I do—quite,” I said.

"So soon—have you forgotten so soon? Do you not *wish* to kiss—my hands?"

Again an awkward silence. And then, with a caress of the melodious voice:

"Dearest!"

At the instant I happened to glance at the picture over the bed. Then I quite understood. The young priest of the medallion looked very like me. In a moment of uncontrollable revulsion I tried to withdraw my hands; but she gripped them, and a little terror sped across her face.

"No! You shall not!" she cried. "Oh, you must—*must* kiss my hands, as you used to do before I was ill. You cannot have forgotten—so soon—so very soon! Oh, kiss my hands! Then I shall know best of all that you are not the dream. Arthur—kiss—my—hands!"

At the end it was a mad, ineffable plea. I put my lips upon them, wrinkled and withered and calloused as they were; and I was glad then, and I am glad now, that I could bring a smile of such wondrous glory to a human face.

"Ah, you are not the dream! And my lips, too—kiss my lips, Arthur!"

And I kissed her lips.

I half sat on the bed, and she kept me at her side, with an arm about me.

"Oh, it seems like years and years instead of only a few days, or at most a few weeks. It can't have been more than a few weeks since they told me that you were ill with the fever and would die. Oh, sweetheart, I feel yet the terror; it ran straight through

me, and then"—she stopped to laugh—"and then it turned back and ran straight through me again—and again—and again! That is the way with terror, is n't it? And then they told me that I was going to be ill, too, and that I might die. That was when I sent for you." She laughed again. "I told them I *would n't* die till you came—and then you would n't let me die. That 's what you said, don't you know? That you would snatch me back from death to make me your—yes—your bride, sir! But I suppose you were too ill to come at once. At least, I don't remember seeing you until to-day. Oh, perhaps, sweetheart, you have been by my side through it all, and I only knew you to-day? For my head has been wrong. Oh, I know that! That is what I mean by the dream. One's head is always wrong when one has the fever. Yes, I know that you have been here all the weeks—oh, maybe months—of my illness. Because *you* are quite well. Oh, it was sweet for you to give me your own dear face to rest my eyes upon first. But you were always sweet, always! Oh, there is no one in all the world like you!"

The emotion, the joy, exhausted her. She stopped to rest. Then she saw me more critically.

"I do not like it that you have so outstripped me in getting well. Why, you look as if you had not been ill at all! It must have been *months* instead of weeks. Come closer. My eyes seem dim—like those of a very old person. But that is the way when one has been ill. The eyes are weak. I must take care of them. Some moments your face seems quite vague. Has n't it been months since I sent for you, dearest?"

"It has been months," I said.

"Yes. But what does that matter? We are together again—never, never to part. And it is sweet—sweeter than you, a man, can understand—to be together again, never to part. For, Arthur, I am not going to be nasty any longer. We shall be married whenever you like. And please like soon—soon! Only you know I *did* want the trousseau so much! But now"—she became girlishly arch—"when shall it be, sir?"

"As soon as you wish," I said.

"Oh, very well, if *you* have no wishes about the matter! *Once* you had—very decided wishes."

She laughed surely, and I said "Yes," trying to echo the laugh. This comforted her.

"Oh, I *know* your wishes! How could I not know them? Did I not hear them day by day? And now, just at this one moment, I am sorry that I did not heed them. If I had I would now be your wife. And that would be sweeter than even this. Your wife!"

She looked away toward the hidden sunrise. The glory of the Sabbath which was rising came into her face.

"Oh, it is so splendid—your wife! There is nothing so splendid in all the world! Your *wife*!"

After a moment she resumed the other thought.

IV

WHEN JANE WAS TO HAVE BEEN A BRIDE

"ONE day—you must remember *that*—you *commanded* me to marry you! Don't you remember how I told

you it was not quite time to begin to *obey*? That, anyhow, I would not be married in your slums, but in my own home. And so there! Oh, it was nearly a quarrel! But then you said you were sorry, and I was much more sorry; for, you see, I had to be sorry for two. Always a woman must. Because I had been so nasty myself—to you—*you*!—and because *you* were sorry. And then I told you what the true, the real reason was. How a bride *must* have a trousseau, and that you would never respect me if I married you without one. And I would have one that was glorious, splendid. Oh, there are a thousand things a bride must think of which a bridegroom has no conception of—none at all! The tailor makes him a bridegroom, but a bride makes herself. And, darling, you must let a bride have her way; for she is a bride only once. Yes, sir; only once. Oh, yes; I know there are women who *marry* two, three, *four* times. But even they are *brides* but once. The rest? Well, I shall be married but *once*. Ah, that dear bridehood! Think! To see every little piece of the trousseau grow into marvels of lace and silk! To do all the thousands of little things one will never, never do again—*never*! The things which one has lived for and dreamed of from childhood! And to do them all with love infinite—oh, infinite! To consecrate each stitch with kisses; to say to every little flimsy thing: ‘Be beautiful; be the most beautiful and dainty in the world! You are to adorn *his* bride—*him*, the king, the emperor, the god, the all in all!’ And then, when each little thing is done, to hold it up to the light; to put it on and off, oh, a hundred times; to stand this way and that before

the mirror—to make it more perfect after it is perfect. And then, at the very last, to put each piece away in rose-leaves or violets, with guilty kisses and caresses, with rapture a man can never know, with tears—both of joy and of sorrow; to watch them as a miser does his treasure; to get up early in the morning for a look; to take one alone late at night—after one has prayed God to keep him for whom they all are; to wait for the *one* day in all the life of a woman—her splendid, glorious, delirious wedding-day!”

She paused again, perhaps from exhaustion; but the rapture which had come with the sun remained.

“You will tire yourself, I fear,” I said gently.

“Tire myself talking about my wedding? When did ever a girl tire of talking of her wedding? And to him she is to wed? Oh, let her talk! Never, never again can she, will she, be so eloquent! Does it bore you—perhaps just a little?”

I said that it did not.

“Oh, dearest, a man does not understand because—just because he is a man.”

She laughed lowly. But I could see that the strength with which she supported this emotion was artificial.

“You don’t mind me saying that? I like you to be a man. And you are—you always were—more of a man than any one I knew. Yet you were sweet. Oh, I think the bigger and greater and braver and stronger a man is, the more manly he is, the sweeter, the more like a woman, he is inside at the heart, soul. So you were always sweet to me. And you would let me talk, talk, talk; and I remember how sometimes

the tears came when you did not even know it—for me! You see, I *must* tell you! You *must* understand. There is no one for me else. We are orphans, outcasts. Other girls have their sisters or intimate friends to tell it to. I have not—only you—only you in all the whole world now. I chose it to be so. I wanted no one but you. For in you I found everything I wished. You could understand better than most girls could. That is why I talk to you of it. Why, don't you know that girls laugh and cry over everything, and for the same reason? When they are going to be married they grow possessed. They tear up all the old letters, and weep over them. They put away the dolls they have treasured from infancy—and first kiss them, sobbing. They put away the books they have kept from their school-days, reading first the inscriptions in them. They put away all childish things to begin another and infinitely sweeter life—the life of a *woman*! Oh, yes; it is as completely another life for a girl as if she were born anew. Yes; to begin another and sweeter life. To take leave, joyous, eager, hopeful leave, of the old life; to reach out madly, tempestuously, for the new one; to dream, both waking and sleeping, of *him*; to plan for all the future, for all eternity!”

For a moment she stopped, and I forgot, in the sweetness of her passion, who and what she was, and fancied her a girl on the verge of the bridehood she was telling me of so thrillingly. At the end she just whispered. She sobbed a little.

“And, at the last, to come to—you—into your arms! To cease to be—except as you are. To be one with

you! To be lost, absorbed, in you! All this have I felt and been, except this last—except to come to you. Ah, sweetheart, is it not true that a woman is a bride but once?"

"Yes," I said.

The trousseau is ready—almost ready. And every piece has been made and gathered with smiles and tears, just as I have told you. Go, look! But do not touch. There—in the closet!"

I went, compelled, driven, to the place she pointed out. The shelves of the closet were loaded with parcels. I could tell which were those of the earlier years by their greater care and daintiness. These were in white papers. Later they were in manila paper. Those of the last of her years were ill made and were in newspapers. Some were unkempt and soiled with much carrying. One had the mud of the street upon it—where it had perhaps fallen at the assault of some boy, such as I was once. What the parcels contained I know not. I obeyed her, and touched none of them.

But the old and grimy closet breathed an odor of rose-leaves as I opened it, and again as I closed it—that odor which always seems to me as dim and misty and evanescent as the past. And as I stood there, in that rose-laden atmosphere, I knew once more why *I* had not married, why *I* cared for no one more than another, why I had lived my life with no comrade, no other soul, and why I meant to live it that way. There in that rose-odor of the ineffable past I stopped, with my face to the closed door, and saw the flower-faced girl who had died. It had been very long ago, but

I saw her there. There had never been another like her; there never could be.

V

WHEN JANE SANG SOFTLY "FADING, STILL FADING"

WHEN I came again to Jane she had rested, and her eyes glowed upon me. She must have seen the tenderness in my own, for she put her hands within mine and said archly:

"You did not touch?"

"I did not touch," I answered.

"It shall be," she went on, "as soon as the doctor says I am well enough. And he shall say that very soon. For you will tell him, and I will tell him, and he will not be able to resist. And you will help with kisses and caresses. Ah, it has been very sweet, has it not, dear? The long walks in the dirty streets—the sunny and the rainy ones. Oh, sweetheart, of all the days, I prefer the sunny ones, of course, because the sun and your love seem to belong together. But if not those, then the rainy ones. For then we can be very close, even in the open streets, under the umbrella!"

She laughed roguishly.

"And the smell of the garlic—how I hated that at first! Don't you remember how you said that my nose was too insignificant to take offense at it? And that I said that it was n't half as big as yours? And

how you answered that for that reason I ought not to hate it half as much as you did, whereas I hated it twice as much, which was absurd? And how you funnily prophesied that I would learn to like the smell of garlic, as you had learned to like it? Well, darling, I *did*! Did I ever before confess that? No; I don't think I did. I do so now, father—father confessor! I confess that I love the smell of the garlic—and *you*. I confess that without you it is still garlic—and that I hate it! There, Arthur! Was n't it all strange and beautiful? No one has ever been like that or done like that before! We two orphans all alone down here! Don't you remember how I tried to persuade you not to come? You looked so dainty in your clericals and your serious patrician face! I was afraid it would have to be always dirty, like theirs, poor things! And I was absolutely certain you would always have muddy shoes!"

Again she laughed joyously.

I kept my silence.

"And I told you the thieves would be sure to snatch your cross! And, when you lost it, the greatest of the thieves brought it back to you! Then I said—do you remember?—that if you *would* do it, I would come too, and keep your house for you, and keep you neat and tidy, and go about with you, to protect you! Oh, sweetheart, protect *you*, whom the great God protects! But I did not understand then, dearest. I did *not*! How could I know that you mean not to be like them, but to make them like you! But, anyhow, I did all that, did n't I, sweetheart? And, even though I did not understand, I *did* keep your house, and your

clothes, and—your—*heart*! Oh, yes; you thought I would n't—that I would not hold out. But you did not know that a woman can do *anything, anywhere*, if the man she loves is there—if it is for him. And soon I *liked* it. Because it was so very sweet to go about with you—only you—to the sick, the poor, the hungry, the dying, every day, every day! Oh, I remember that people said mean and nasty things about us—that is, the people in the world we had come from. But what did that matter? We were in another world, and in that world every soul who knew us loved us, yes, every soul. Why, don't you remember the day you could n't find me until you came to that den of thieves at Front and Lombard streets, and found me with all the thieves in the half-darkness, singing to Billy Briggs, who had been shot and was dying? I did n't know you were there till your voice joined mine. Do you remember what it was we sang?

“Fading, still fading, the last beam is shining;
Father in heaven, the day is declining;
Safety and innocence fly with the light—”

She sang it with a sweetness that was wondrous. And, as I happened to know the old tune, I sang it with her, taking the tenor.

“Yes,” she cried, clapping her hands, “that way. Oh, yes; you soon found out, little preacher of the poor, that I was doing as much as you, and doing it as well, and that the people liked me even more than they liked you. And were you not just a little jealous? Ah, they liked me because I am a woman, that is all.

And you were a little angry when they called me the Goddess of Thieves. Of course it would n't have sounded well to have to announce from the pulpit of Grande Square that the Goddess of Thieves would visit in Alaska Street on such-and-such days! You remember how that came about? I had always such an extraordinary affection for the thief on the cross, and I told them about that so often—and it was so hard, so very hard, for them to believe that Christ had said, 'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.'

Her speech had become slower and more difficult. Now for a moment she lay quite still. Her eyes closed wearily, but the happy smile never left her face. When she went on again it was a mere murmur at first; but presently her voice grew a little stronger. Yet always it was soft.

"Oh, Arthur, do you remember how we used to get into corners—to—well, so that you might hold my hands a little? We knew where all the places were where it was safe to do that. I liked that place on Catharine Street where the stairway was so dark. You could kiss me there. Do you remember how, when I said we must spend our honeymoon in Italy, you said: 'Yes, Little Italy!' Well, so it shall be—right here in Little Italy!"

VI

WHEN THE SUN MADE TERROR PLAIN

THE sun was rising and making objects in the garret plainer. She had not yet seen anything but my face.

Now, as I inadvertently turned it to the light, she examined it a little more anxiously.

"Arthur dear," she said then, "there is something wrong. You do not look quite yourself. I don't know what it is, either. Are your clothes different, or are you thinner, or both? Your hair has been cut; and I am not quite sure I like it that way. It is like Jim Griggs's. And you look older. Ah, I understand. You have been so troubled about me. Darling, stop! Worry makes wrinkles. But there is no more need. I shall be quite well now—and soon."

She stooped and kissed my hands. Something in myself, perhaps, renewed her little doubts, and again she looked up at me:

"Perhaps it is my eyes. They are always weak after the fever. Were n't yours?"

I said they were.

She laughed and said:

"I feel old, old, old, and I shall not be twenty till January! Arthur, get down the picture and hold it up by your face."

I did so. At first I was afraid of this test; but instantly I was reassured: she was quite satisfied.

"Yes, there is some change; I can't quite make out what it is, and I shall not try. I know that you are my Arthur—mine! And that is all I care to know."

I went to hang the picture up again.

"No, take it with you—to your own room. I promised it to you when it was made. Take it. When you go, take it."

The light was coming more and more. Suddenly she stopped and stared about. I saw the gray shadows of terror touch her happy face.

"When you go!" she repeated in vague fear. "Suddenly I am afraid to let you go. I don't—quite know why. Do you?"

"There is no reason for fear," said I. "If I go for a little while, it will be but to come again."

"Yes; your room is still just over mine?"

"Yes," I answered.

But yet her eyes roved the bare garret. More and more the sun lighted it up for her. Never before had I wished the sun to be hidden away. She slowly shuddered back upon me.

"Arthur," she shivered, "I do not—understand!"

Her eyes were riveted upon the bare and grimy shingles.

"What is it you do not understand?" I asked, though I knew.

"All this." She waved her hand outward. "How did I come here?"

I knew nothing to say.

"Arthur, this is not your house—our home? How did I come here? Where am I?"

Then I thought of what she had said.

"I think you are still dreaming," I said gently.

"Oh!" It was a vast sigh of relief. "I thought I had come out of that. You remember I told you when I first saw you. And nothing is real?"

"Nothing," I said.

"Nothing?" she begged wistfully. "Oh, I wish *you* were real. It has been so sweet. Darling, are not *you* real? Oh, please be real!"

"Yes," I said; "I am real."

She tried to be joyous, but distress came down upon her in a moment again.

"Ah, but how can I know? Oh, yes! The scar on the palm of your hand! Let me see! You used to say that I might always know you by that, for it could never change."

VII

"ONLY WAITING TILL THE SHADOWS"

BEFORE I could prevent her, she had seized my hand and put it close to her eyes. With a moan she let it go and covered her face.

"There *is* no scar," she whispered.

I took her hands from her eyes and said gently, piteously:

"Your eyes *are* very bad."

Something like trust came back to her face; but the change in it had been vast and shocking.

"And these are not shingles, and this is not a foul floor, a garret?"

"Poor eyes!" said I.

Her face lighted up.

"Why, of course it is the eyes!" she said. "How could it be otherwise? You would not let it be otherwise. You—would—tell me!" And she laughed again. "But it is hard to understand. Be patient with me, dear. The covers of my bed were dainty. These—"

She touched with loathing the rag which covered her. As she did so she caught sight of her hands for the first time. Her face flushed burningly, then

became in an instant pinched and leaden. I understood, but I had no words to dam up those which rushed from her soul:

“Arthur—are you—*sure*—sure—it is a—dream? My God, what is it? This—this—seems more real than anything!”

She held up her hands to me.

“These are the hands of an—old—old—woman! And poor! One who works! See, they are stained calloused, wrinkled, bloodless! The nails are unclean.”

She examined them, analyzed them, as if they were not her own; then she put them up to me.

“And that is what I dreamed,” she whispered on: “that it all happened long, long ago—years and years ago. They told me that you were dead, and then—very suddenly—something happened to my head, and I lived to be an old, old woman, and wore other people’s clothes, but always the kind in which you had seen me last, so that you would know me when you came. For I seemed to know that you were *not* dead—but gone, perhaps, to Italy for your health, and that you would come back. Always I was a little uncertain whether you were dead or whether you were in Italy and would come back to me. And that made my hair gray. But I preferred to believe that you would come back, so I wore always the clothes you knew,—the clothes of the pictures,—so that you would not pass me by. But I was very, very old; and all that happiness I had thought was but yesterday, and would be again to-morrow, was long, long ago and could never be again. That there had been no hap-

piness for years and years and years—only waiting, waiting, waiting—”

Then, suddenly, as if for other proof, she reached up and brought around to her eyes a handful of hair. And, as if for confirmation, she took another from the other side.

She shuddered back upon the pillow, and pulled the hair over her face.

There was a shutter to the window. I softly closed it and shut out the sun. Then I slowly took her hands from her face.

“Such a dreadful dream!” I said. “Look!”

I put the picture before the dim eyes.

“Yes,” she wondered; and then, “Yes—yes—yes.”

“And has it not always hung on the wall of your own room?” I begged.

“Why, yes,” she said gropingly; then gladly, “Yes—yes—yes!”

“And do you not see and touch *me*?”

“Yes,” she said still more happily. She looked about the now shadowed room. “And the room is not the same now. Yes, it must have been the dream; for now I am very tired, and the doctor has always said that the dream comes when one is tired. Only I seem to have been tired for years and years. No; I cannot see the shingles. Arthur—”

She turned, and for a long minute looked into my very soul. Then she whispered—she could scarce do more:

“Arthur—you have never deceived me. You have never spoken an untruth, even in kindness. Do not now. I could—endure it if it were—from you!”

"Thank God! you need not endure it," I answered.
"He doeth all things well!"

"And my hair is not—white?"

Just then, as if God were helping me again, a reflected beam fell upon it. "The sun is in it," I answered.

"Yes; it used to be red, yellow, all sorts of colors! Don't you know you used to say the sun was in it? And my hands—"

Suddenly she thrust them out to me.

"Kiss them!"

I did it, one after the other.

She laughed joyously. The pink came back to her face.

"Now I *know* that it is true. You would not kiss them if they were as I thought them—old and bloodless, wrinkled, unclean. You could not. You used to call them exquisite, immaculate."

She put them to her dimming eyes.

"Now they do not look as they did. How strange! And how I was frightened! But, Arthur, you—kissed them!"

She said it with a mighty triumph, and was at peace.

"Arthur," she whispered happily, "bliss has come."

"Yes," I whispered back.

"Only waiting till the shadows
Are a little longer grown,
Only waiting till the reapers
Their last sheaf have gathered home."

She laughed a little. I sang it for her murmuringly.

"It is like that—evening, rest, peace, sleep, dreams!" I said.

"The—waiting?" she questioned, with the long sigh of a tired child.

"Yes," I answered, "only waiting!"

VIII

WHEN DO YOU THINK SHE WILL WAKE?

A LONG time she looked at the hands, smiling. But presently I knew that she did not see them, and that it was something else her mind was engaged upon. At last she looked slowly up at me once more. The glory, the immortal youth, had come back to her face. She smiled with great surety. Then she laughed, the low, full laugh of matchless joy. She was looking deeply into my eyes.

"How foolish I have been! If I had only stopped to—think. *You* are young and splendid, just as you were a little while ago. Therefore *I* cannot be *very* old, for you are seven years older than I am! But it seems so dreadful to go to sleep at twenty and wake to find one's self—oh, eighty!—and to know that there had been no happiness, only terror, and insanity, and waiting, and hunger, and weariness! But the hair and the hands,"—she once more looked about the room,—“and the other things, frightened me, terrified me. But now—forgive—O my beloved, forgive your doubting—sweetheart—forgive—”

She was at the end of the resources the doctor had given her. She sank exhausted into the pillow. For a long time neither of us spoke. I had her hand. With that she seemed quite satisfied. She smiled on.

"Arthur," she said presently, in a far voice, "when—do you think—I shall—wake? The dream, you know. I want—to wake—from it—sometime. Arthur—when—shall I—wake to—my—happiness?"

I could not at once answer. The tears were in my eyes. I hoped I should not need to. But after another silence she whispered from very far:

"Arthur—dearest—you never deceived me. Tell me 'true'! When—shall I—wake?"

A moment I meditated my answer.

But she pressed for it, softly, gently, as if it might not come before she slept—as if she must have it before she slept.

"Arthur—my love—when shall I wake—to my joy—joy—joy?"

She began to drowse. Once more God seemed to help me to my answer.

"Very—soon!" I said.

"Arthur—let it be—in your—arms."

"Yes."

"Now I shall sleep. I am very—very tired. I suppose I have talked too much. The doctor told me—not to—talk so—much. But—it was too—sweet to resist—opening my eyes—and seeing—you—you—you. That is always the way when one is getting well—to be tired—by every—little—thing."

"Yes," I said.

"It was so—with you; was n't it?"

"Yes."

This was now my one word.

"Tired—tired—tired!" she murmured from out the shadows, happily. "And if I should—sleep—just a

minute—you will—not go away? I want you here—when I wake—to see you first, as the other time. And will you hold my hand—that way—till I wake? I will not sleep long. Will you—hold my hand—till—I wake—beloved?”

“Yes,” I said.

THE STRIKE ON THE
SCHLAFEPATZ RAILROAD



THE STRIKE ON THE SCHLAFFEPLATZ RAILROAD

I

CHUFF

“MY mem’ry works while I sleep,” laughed Hannikin Chuff, as he rose.

That of his daughter did not. He tapped on her door as he passed. She murmured sleepily within.

“Sleep yit?” he asked, laughing.

“Ye-es.”

“Well—you nefer mind. I ’ll git it myself.” He referred to his breakfast.

But before he returned from the spring she had the fire going.

“Oh, t’at ’s bully!” laughed Hannikin Chuff. “Sought you ’d forgot. *My* mem’ry works while I sleep. Now I kin saw wood.”

This he did.

After breakfast Chuff sawed more wood—for his engine. That is why he had risen an hour earlier. He did not saw wood every day. He filled the tender from the pile he had made, and always kept, in his forehanded fashion, then pumped the boiler full and

the cistern empty. When the fire got going he stood off and looked at his engine.

"Guess I'll clean her—a little," he said affectionately, though she really did not need it.

There were four brass hoops about the boiler, which he kept ineffably bright. The one about the top of the stack he brought a ladder to reach. He set the safety-valve at eighty-five pounds, and opened the ticket-office. Then he filled the tin basin with water from the cock in the tender, and washed, and combed his hair. Finally he took off the jeans which belonged to the engineership, and put on a blue cap marked "Ticket-agent."

Presently there were three passengers, a woman with an enormous waist and a basket of apples first.

"Morning," greeted Chuff, busily.

"Ticket!" she puffed into the small window.

"One way?"

"Well, I want to come back."

Chuff cut her uncertainty in two:

"Excursion."

He wrote the date on the ticket, and kept his hand on it guardedly.

"What 's the price?" sighed the fat woman, emptying a netted purse on the sill.

"Sirty-two cents."

"No change yit?"

"No."

"Eggs is down."

"Tickets ain't."

"It 's soon time," said the woman.

"Tey been t'e same for sirty-sefen year," said Chuff, irrelevantly.

The next was a Dunkard with hair parted in the middle and trimmed straight across. He put a tin ear-trumpet into the window.

"What did you charge *her*?" he whispered hugely.

"Sirty-two cents."

"What kin *I* git a ticket for?"

"Sirty-two cents."

"But—t'at 's t'e same!"

"T'is is a one-price railroad," said Chuff.

"Iss it always sirty-two cents?"

"Forefer."

"An' alwaysss will be, I expect," complained the Dunkard.

"I expect."

"I 'fe heared 'at some people rides free?"

"Directors an' employees."

"T'ey call it—"

Chuff helped him:

"Dead-head."

He counted out an unwilling thirty-two cents.

"I sought account I was a kind a relatife I could also be a deceased-head."

"My Sis pays her fare efery time."

The Dunkard turned hopelessly away.

"An' helps at t'e ingine yit," Chuff flung after him cumulatively.

II

CHILL

THE plain young man said stenographically:

"Schlafepplatz and return."

He put down the exact change, then stood with his hand on his hip haughtily.

Chuff gave him his ticket without a word.

"Check for my baggage, please."

Chuff put on a cap marked "Baggage-agent," and gave him his check. His baggage was a green canvas suit-case. Chuff closed the ticket-office and swung the case rudely into the baggage-compartment of the passenger-car. The tin clock showed the time to be eleven minutes past seven. Schedule time was 7:14 A.M. He looked at his watch. Sometimes the two varied. They agreed to-day. He had set them the night before. The safety-valve was blowing gently. He put in a stick of wood and closed the valve. He went over the tender to the baggage-compartment, where he got a cap marked "Conductor." Then he stepped down to the platform.

"All aboard!" he shouted superfluously.

There was some jockeying before Chuff got his engine off and steadied down to her gait. Then he tied the lever with a twine, and collected the tickets.

"Ain't you going fearful fast?" asked the woman with the apples.

"Why, no, Mrs. Gull," said Chuff, with secret pride; "only 'bout sefen miles a' hour."

"'Most as fast as a horse!"

Chuff laughed.

"Oach! A horse kin do fourteen. I 'fe run her t'at fast, though, when she wass young—an' I wass—an' rackless."

"Fast as a horse?"

This was hard for Mrs. Gull to believe.

"Why, some ingines kin go as fast as two horses!" —Chuff's cunning way of saying that they could go twice as fast.

"Heth Chill"—she looked fearfully around, and saw that Chill was at the rear of the car (he was the young man with the green suit-case)—"says *he* kin run a' ingine."

"He can't run t'is one."

"Why?"

"I growed up wiss her. I know all her works—chust like I know my own. She would n't mofe for him. No more 'n I would! She knows me, an' I know her. Chill! Gosh-a-mighty! He don't know a squirting-walve from a windmill! Chill! He worked in a' ingine-shop in Schlafepplatz for sree days or so, an' now he sinks he knows t'is ingine I growed up wiss! Chill! Did you see his tam' little green trunk? An' he yit wants a check! You might as well git a check for you' apples. She 's about a sou-sand yearss old. So am I. She gits rheumatism in her connecting-rods. So do I. She gits mad an' plays hell wiss sings sometimes—like me. Also she gits balky an' won't go. So do I. She 's held toget'er mostly wiss strings an' wire—like me. Yit—she an' me's been friends efer since. She knows me t'e minute I come about. An' you kin chust bet 'at I know her. Heth Chill! She would n't mofe a' inch for him! I bet a dollar she 'd bust on him."

"Some day mebbe she 'll bust on you," sighed the woman, ominously. "I 'm always afeard."

Proud as Chuff was that his reckless courage should make her fear, he yet comforted her gaily.

"You sink she 'd hurt me! Look-a yere; as long as I run t'at ingine you safe. She an' me air friends. Some day she 'll play out, I expect. But so will I. Don't you worry. I got strings an' wires enough to make her last as long as I do. When she plays out she 'll chust *stop*."

"An' I got to walk home?"

"Chust so."

"After paying my fare?"

"Well—if you 'd rat'er be blowed up— Say,"—now Chuff was serious,—"*she* would n't hurt *no* one if she would blow up. She 'd jist bust t'e strings an' wires, an' separate."

Chuff reached the Dunkard by luffing.

III

FLICKER

A RED cow sans horns was grazing at the side of the road-bed. She looked up at the train familiarly.

"Flicker," said Chuff, affectionately.

"Yes; nossing like pastur' airly for cows," remarked the deaf Dunkard.

"No!" shouted Chuff.

"She 's fat."

"As butter."

"*How* much?"

"Twelve pounds a week."

It was always easier to join the deaf man's misunderstanding than to correct him.

The Dunkard took out his pencil and figured.

"Sree sixty a week!" (Three thirty-two was the correct arithmetic.) "You 'll be rich next you know."

He looked out of the window.

"An' you git more hay t'an you kin feed, I year."

"Ten tons more."

The Dunkard figured again.

"Hunderd an' twenty dollers a year." (It was only a hundred and two.)

"Yes."

"Goshens!"

"Goot hay, too. I don't squirt no steam on t'e grass."

"T'e railroad 's a goot sing for you."

"Yes. I got a farm two an' a half mile long an' sixty-sree feet wide!"

The railroad man looked proudly at the haycocks dotting the roadway.

"An' it don' cost you nossing to haul it."

"Not a cent."

He added:

"An' I cut it by moonlight."

"Blinsinger 's kicking up a fuss, too. Says you 're t'e only man 'at 's making any money out of t'e road."

At this Chuff only laughed.

"Well, t'ey kin pay me a selery an' take t'e hay," he said, laughing recklessly.

The Dunkard, whose name was Eberhard Drouse, now asked:

"How kin a' ingine run itself, while you an' me wisit?"

"Well, she can't. Chust she an' me we understand

one anot'er. She does what I want. An' she 's tied wiss a string."

The engine gave a sigh.

"What 's t'at?"

Chuff said he did n't know, but he did. He has tened to get Chill's ticket. Chill pretended to have mislaid it. Chuff stood stoically by. The engine sighed again. Then there was one long, hopeless sigh, and she stopped. Still Chill searched for his ticket. The train began slowly to run backward down the grade.

"Gife up your ticket," shouted Chuff, "or I 'll pitch you off!"

Chill suddenly gave it up.

"Mebbe t'e string slipped," said the Dunkard, in fear, as Chuff flashed past him.

Then, in panic, he hurried back to Chill, whom he thought uncannily wise.

He put one end of his trumpet at his mouth and the other into Chill's ear.

"What 's t'e matter?" he shouted.

Chill shied and gently reversed the machine.

"Nothing," he said in the proper end.

The Dunkard kept the trumpet in his own ear now, but hovering perilously about Chill's face.

"Ain't we going packvard?" he asked.

"Yes," said Chill.

"T'at 's not nossing!"

"Pretty near it. Maybe it 's a little less."

"I got a mind to chump off!"

"Don't jump," said Chill; "walk."

"It 's no danger?"

Chill laughed odiously.

"She runs better backward than forward."

"Young man," said the Dunkard, "do not scoff when danger is nigh."

The thick-waisted woman was standing in the aisle, listening for their wise conclusion of the matter, ready to fly if the Dunkard should. She had forgotten her apples.

But Chuff had put on the hand-brake and stopped the train. Then he got off and worked for a while at the right piston with a monkey-wrench. Presently the sighing of the escaping steam ceased. The train moved forward.

"I 'll show Chill a sing or two," said Chuff. "I 'll make up efery minute of t'at time."

Not on that up grade, but on the next, the down grade. The momentum of the train was frightful, its rocking perilous.

The Dunkard again became panicky. Again the thick-waisted woman stood in the aisle, ready to follow him.

"Gosh!" gibed Chill. "He must be making ten—"

"Ten!" gasped the Dunkard.

"Ten miles."

"Ten miles?" cried the woman, in vague horror.

"An hour! Don't you know *anything*? Never mind. It won't be for long. She 'll be off the track in a minute."

"Off t'e track!"

The two other passengers cried it together. The Dunkard hurried to his seat, as if safety were there.

He held on desperately with hands and feet. The thick-waisted passenger did precisely the same thing in the seat just behind him.

But nothing immediately happened.

"It won't hurt," shouted Chill. "She does it nearly every day. She 's a lobster."

They did not understand this. The Dunkard chided Chill in a shrill, tragic voice, without looking round at him:

"Young man, you shall mend your vay. I haf trafeled ofer t'e railroad afore, an' she has not gone off t'e track."

To show his faith in Chuff and his engine and himself, he relaxed his hold. The woman did likewise.

"She always does when *I* travel on her," said Chill, with melancholy.

"It iss a varning unto you, young man. Mend your vay."

"Chuff 'd better mend his. But, when he does, it 's on Sunday. That 's what 's doing it—"

At that moment the engine left the rails. Chill laughed. The Dunkard flew into the seat in front. The apples from the fat woman's basket rolled suddenly forward, then backward, along the aisle. She had heavily subsided to the floor.

"If he did n't hate me so I 'd go out and help to get her on," mused Chill.

"Why does he hade you?" asked the Dunkard, rearranging his long hair. "You haf told t'e truth. It does not hurt."

The woman remained safely on the floor.

"Because I know more about his old lobster than he does."

"Twice you haf spoke t'at strange word. I understand it to be a fish. By what similitute do you liken Mr. Chuff's unhappy ingine unto it? Explain these."

"Oh, she 's a lobster—that 's all. You see, when I 'm aboard Chuff tries to show off. Then his old crab slips, and he 's got to get out an' put her on. That 's not so hard, though. She never runs a foot after she goes off. She only weighs a ton or so. I could get her on with a fence-rail. Some day she 'll fall apart. She 's a lobster, you see."

But even then the Dunkard did not see.

Chill was looking out of the window at Chuff. He had got the hand-jacks out of the cab, and was putting the engine on the track with the skill of long experience.

"If he does get her off he can get her on, too," said Chill, with unwilling admiration.

The train reached Schlafepplatz without further incident, and in the evening, at 6:46, it started back to Strasburg, reaching there as usual. The distance was two and a half miles.

IV

ERMENTRUDE

THIS was on the 30th of June. On the Fourth of July Chuff had his daughter for a passenger. And

again the melancholy Hetherington Chill bought a ticket. He raised his hat surlily to the girl, and then turned his back on her.

"I'm sorry," said Chuff to his daughter, "that you 'fe got to haf him for company—"

"Company!" gasped his daughter.

Chuff laughed hugely.

"Oach! I don' mean for no beau,"—he grinned at the absurdity of it,—"*chust* on t'e train. But he alwaysss sets on t'e hind seat, an' you kin set on t'e front, an' he won't bot'er you—it 'll be sirty-sree feet between yous—*chust—chust*—he 'll see t'e back of you' head." He laughed, and then looked at it himself. "Yit—t'at 's wort' looking at—not so, Sis?"

He got Chill's ticket,—which the young man surrendered promptly, to Chuff's disappointment,—and then, as he passed on to his engine, said to his daughter:

"He 's a dam' sing! Ain't he, Sis?"

"Yes," faintly whispered his daughter.

"No good whatefer!"

"No"—faintly.

But when he was gone she went back to the melancholy young man, and kissed him and said she loved him. And he kissed her and said he loved her. She sat on the arm of his seat, where she could see the cab of the engine. He put his arm around her, watching the cab of the engine. Having done this, he said again:

"I love you, Sis."

(But her name was Ermentrude.)

"More 'n you lofe Pink?"

This was sheer subtlety.

"Yes. I've loved you more than her ever since—"

He stopped and looked away reminiscently.

"Efer since I changed my hair," sighed Ermentrude, happily.

This referred to the time, the summer before, when Ermentrude had made her first trip to Schlafeplatz, and had seen a young woman at the hotel altogether like the pictures in the newspapers, and had copied her.

"Poor Pink!" said Ermentrude. "Mebbe if *she'd* change her hair—"

"Never!" answered Hetherington Chill, quite as she wished.

She kissed him again. Then she saw her father coming over the tender. She lingered perilously while he changed his cap. When he arrived, however, Chill was whistling sadly out of the window. Ermentrude was inspecting her finger-tips.

"Next stop, Schlafeplatz!" said Chuff. "Passengers change for points nort', east, sout', an' west!" To his daughter he said unofficially: "Sank God! he ain't got t'e little green trunk. If I had to gife him a check to-day I'd smack him—t'e way he's treated you!"

"Yes," she said, and laughed.

Chuff laughed too.

And Chill laughed—when Chuff was gone.

"Gosh! If he had seen my arm—"

"Sh-h-h!" whispered Ermentrude.

Chuff changed his cap once more and returned to his engine.

When they had completely arrived, Chill went one

way and Ermentrude another. But each passed a shop where certain frocks were displayed in the window. Then they met behind the fence of the hotel.

"The green one," whispered Chill, watching northward.

"Yes, t'e green one," agreed Ermentrude, watching southward and eastward.

The fence was on the west.

He put his arm around her. She kissed him.

"If he had n't stopped in t'e baggage-place to put on his conductor-cap—"

Chill laughed sardonically to Ermentrude.

"We 'd been ketched."

This referred to the last exchange of caresses as they had left the train.

"An' you might be—dead!"

"Mebbe," doubted Chill.

She kissed him again. Then they flew apart.

"He 's shut off steam!" whispered she.

"He 's got to shut off a lot of other things yet. No hurry," answered Chill, bravely.

But Ermentrude would not take the risk of further delay behind the fence of the hotel.

She took Chuff to the same store.

"She gits whatefer she wants, Sis does," said Chuff.

"But t'is—say, can't you make it four ninety-eight?"

The saleswoman briefly refused to do this.

Chuff decided to take it. But he did not have the money. He proposed to hypothecate his hay and butter. The saleswoman called in the proprietor.

He looked at the dress. It was faded down the front where the sun had shone on it.

"I ain't got no money," laughed Chuff, happily, "but I got hay and butter a-plenty. My Sis gits whatefer she wants, efen if—"

"I 'll take your hay and butter," said the merchant, hastily.

Chuff gave him a promissory note for it, to be paid in butter and eggs or money.

Then, since it was so easy, Ermentrude suggested a line of lingerie, and things which, at another time, would have bankrupted Chuff. But to-day it was excessively easy. He bought everything she wished, and gave another and very much larger promissory note. When they left the store Chuff was laughing.

On the way home Chill whistled very sadly out of the window. Ermentrude looked, smiling happily, at her pink finger-tips. Chuff was thinking.

"Say," he said to his daughter, "I guess I'm a little skeered. I nefer gafe no promissory note afore. It's got to be *paid*—sometime?"

Ermentrude did not know.

"An' chust suppose Flicker should go dry? Gosh!"

The engine began to slow down, and Chuff, much depressed, hurried over the tender and pulled the lever.

Ermentrude went and sat on the arm of Chill's seat.

"Ain't it lofely!" she said callously.

Chill sadly kissed her.

"Oh, *but* I like t'at!" said the girl.

"Why?" asked Chill.

"I mostly got to kiss *you*."

"Oh!" said Chill.

"I got eferysing I wanted."

"You all ready?"

"An' some sings I did n't ast for."

"You all *ready*?"

"Oh—*yes*!"

"Well?"

"An' it's too late to make me take 'em back. I got 'em on t'e train! Yere! T'e note won't git due for sirty days, you know, an' afore t'at we 'll—be—" She sighed happily.

"Too late," agreed Chill, happily.

Now, the Pink of whom Chill and Ermentrude had spoken was a Miss Pestifer to whom Chill's affections had been somewhat engaged before Ermentrude changed her hair. When she heard of the green frock, Pink at first cried, then reflected, then watched.

Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned.

V

BLINSINGER

ONE day, when the train arrived, Chuff observed something posted on the brick part of the barn where the ticket-office was:

NOTICE

TO THE EMPLOYEE OF THE SCHLAFEPLATZ RAILROAD

From this date it is ordered by the President and Board of Directors of the Schlafepplatz Railroad that no cows or

other domestic cattle shall be allowed to graze on pasture on the road-bed of the said railroad, the said grazing on said pasturing being dangerous to both the said domestic animals and the rolling-stock of the said company. Also that the hay growing thereon is the property of the said company and to be cut, cured, and sold as such, and the receipt therefrom accounted for to the company by its employee.

By order of the Board,

B. BLINSINGER,

President.

For a moment Chuff was stunned. Then he put on his civilian clothing and went to see President Blinsinger.

"What in sunder does it mean?" demanded Chuff, savagely.

"Mean?"

It was all he asked.

"Chust what it says," answered Blinsinger, stiffly.

Chuff did n't believe it, even then.

"We haf sold t'e hay a'ready cut. Haul it to Brinker's varehouse to-morrow. You 'll git a selery. You understand?"

Chuff said he did, but he did n't. On the way home he said only:

"T'at promissory note! Sunder! Selery! Lightning! Hay! Dam'!"

That night Chuff, without the assistance of Ermen-trude, who nearly always did what might be called the lighter literary duties that fell to him as the employee of the railroad, composed a letter to the president and board of directors.

There was no honorary opening or closing. It plunged in the middle:

For thirty-seven year I haf ben the employee you mention. I took your old goat of a ingine when she was new and growed up with her. I mended the road-bed on Sundays when you went to church and praid. You nefer put a cent in her since. The tracks is held down with stakes and fence-rails which I found an put in myself. The ingine is held together with wires and strings which you nefer paid for. The only selery you efer pay me was the hay an the pastur. The only trouble we efer had was ofer a Canadian ten-cent pice which I tuck in and I made that good with one of my own. Well you kin go to hell. The first man at runs that ingine 'll git blowed up. She wont stand no one but me. An he wont understand the wires an strings. And I wont run her no more till I git the hay and pastur back. I growed up with her he didnt. An you kin keep your hay an Ill keep my cow. You are hereby notified that I Hannikin Chuff have struck.

The next morning the placard of the company had beside it one done in a bolder hand, on stiffer paper :

STRIKE ON THE SCHLAFEPLATZ RAILROAD!!!!

The Community is hereby notified that the Employee of the Schlafeplatz Railroad has Struck !

HANNIKIN CHUFF,
Employee.

So the train did not leave the next morning; the engine was cold, the ticket-office was closed, the hay rotted in its cocks. And, as the days went by, Strassburg desperately felt the strike. Eggs could be had for the asking. Butter was not worth the making. Milk was milked and poured out on the ground, for the well-being of the cows. At first Chuff stalked among them like an avenging god; then he stayed at

home and cut the grass in his yard closer and closer for Flicker. From time to time those who owned cows or chickens (some owned both, and upon these the rigors of the strike fell with greatest severity) would create committees to call upon Chuff with a view to compromising the affair. President Blinsinger was always ready to be approached. Chuff was iron. To all overtures he replied :

"T'e pastur', t'e hay, or nossing!"

Presently a rumor prevailed that the company had approached Hetherington Chill with a proposition. That night Chuff stuffed the safety-valve with soft paper.

"It 'll blow him to hell t'e first time!" said Chuff, as he stole away in the darkness.

And at this Chuff had an unholy thrill; for he hated the wordless Chill.

But Chill's answer to them who seduced him was :

"Say, I ain't no blank scab!"

It was some time before any one learned what a "blank scab" was. Then they remembered that Chill had been in the railroad strike at Schlafepplatz, had lost his job, had come to live in retirement at Strasburg.

Chuff was disappointed. He had hoped that Chill would try to run the engine. He still hoped this as he grew more morbid and savage. Not only did he not remove the soft paper: he put more in, and stuffed it harder.

Later a collector knocked at Chuff's door. He had the two promissory notes.

"'Misfortunes nefer come single,'" quoted Chuff.

"We *thought* it was for a wedding," grinned the collector, misunderstandingly.

"What wass for a wedding? Who?"

"Why, the things you bought."

"What t'e tefl you talking about?"

"Well, were n't they?"

"T'ey wass for my Sis, an' none too good for her t'en, no matter what 's happened since."

"Did n't she get married in 'em?"

"No."

"Maybe it is n't the time yet?"

"I guess not. You crazy. My Sis don't sink no more about gitting merried t'an you do."

"I 'm not thinking about it," said the man, smiling.

"I expect not," sneered Chuff, inhospitably, as if he had said that no woman would have him.

"I am married." He smiled again.

Chuff was put out for only an instant.

"I sorry for t'e woman."

"Oh, I don't know," grinned the amiable collector, "those are the things we usually sell for brides. I only thought—"

"Stop sinking. Take anysing you kin lay you' hands on. I ain't got no money, nor no hay nor butter. T'at 's what I wass to pay in. I 'fe mowed t'e roots of t'e grass out. An' I 'fe struck. You want ol' Flicker? I expected to put t'e hay in one end of her an' git t'e butter out t'e ot'er. Take her an' do it yourself," said Chuff, desperately.

The collector said he did not want Flicker. He knew nothing about the process of turning hay into butter by putting it through her.

There was some more Chuffing, as it was called in that vicinity, and the collector went away threatening Chuff with jail.

Chuff said he did n't care. But he did, mightily. Now, also, his memory worked while he slept. He had never been in jail. He fancied it much worse than it is.

VI

PINK

PINK PESTIFER watched her recreant lover. One night she followed him to the lifeless engine. It was opaquely dark, but she could vaguely hear him familiarizing himself with its machinery. She did not know what it meant. But night after night the strange performance went on. Then, one night, she saw a slender figure in a green dress with him. She crept up and listened.

She heard Chill ask:

"Which is the reverser? It's too dark to—"

"Yere; an' t'is is t'e—"

So it went on. Hard as it was to believe, Ermentrude was instructing Chill in the management of the sleeping machine. Ermentrude! Pink understood the mystery of the green dress now.

She started for Chuff's house. But it was a mile.

"Mr. Chuff," she gasped, "Ermentrude—Chill—"

Chuff jumped into his clothes.

"Ermentrude Chill!" he shouted.

"T'at 's what she 'll be unless you get t'ere sooner"; and Miss Pestifer laughed hysterically.

Chuff was already in his daughter's room. He lighted a lamp. The bed had not been slept in. Her clothing was gone—the dress, all the lingerie he had given his note—his more than all—for!

Pink Pestifer was at his side by this time.

"Yes," she cried; "it was a trosseau."

"What 's t'at?" demanded Chuff, fiercely. "T'is is no time to be highfalutin!"

"Wedding-sings," said Pink.

"Oach! you lie!" said Chuff. But he remembered what the collector had said.

"T'ey 're starting up t'e ingine. I saw 'em. She 's showing him how. You showed *her*—"

But Chuff did not heed her. He had found the note. It said:

Forgive me, dear father. I love him so. I go from your arms to hisn.

"You' daddy has a horse," cried Chuff. "Git him—quick!"

As she was going, Chuff said again:

"An' his army pistol!"

She brought the horse, but not the pistol. She did not want Chill killed.

At parting Chuff said:

"Say, you keep still about t'at—t'at—tros—t'at trosser. It can't be so. My Sis would n't—Gosh-a-mighty! Trosser!"

He was off.

VII

FINIS

THE engine *was* gone. He could neither see nor hear them. He dug both heels into the ribs of Pestifer's surprised horse. The moon rose rapidly—dim and full and ominous. After a mile he had them in sight. He heard the sighing of escaping steam that he knew so well and rejoiced in it for the first time. Presently he could see Chill frenziedly at work with the monkey-wrench. Ermentrude, with the sleeves of the green dress recklessly tucked up, was helping, directing, as he himself might have done.

"Open t'e safety-walve!"

Chuff shouted it till he was too hoarse to shout any more. But they did not hear him, and saw him only as a menace. And if they *should* succeed in stopping the escape at the right piston!

"It 's stuffed!" he yelled again.

The sighing of the steam ceased. The engine moved. Chuff groaned. If Chill had learned how to run her he could beat Pestifer's horse, that was certain. Especially was this the case with the safety-valve stuffed and the leak in the piston closed.

And Chill was pleasantly waving his hand as the engine pulled away from him!

"Say—I don' keer! Do whatefer you' up to. Chust—chust— T'e safety-walve is stuffed! She 'll bust! You 'll git killed—mebbe!"

So it was formulated in his mind ; but he could not say it. He lacked breath.

They were on even terms for the next half-mile, and Chuff began to hope. Then they cut off the passenger-car and pulled away from him. Down the next grade they gained, too. But, as he knew, the coming up-grade would take all their steam. Again he had them almost within calling distance. They cut the tender. He could see the green dress fluttering in the cab. The moon cleared her face as if to help him. He could see Sis putting their last wood into the furnace. Once more they were gaining, though on the heaviest up-grade on the road. They must be carrying over a hundred pounds of steam. Ninety pounds was the extreme limit. They were disappearing, and Pestifer's horse was done for !

Then the end came. There was a sudden wild shriek, —woman or engine or both,—and Chuff saw the smoke-stack languidly mount the air.

When Chuff arrived, the engine was still breathing, like some dying thing, through two ragged holes near the place of the smoke-stack. A ruffle of the green dress restrained the reversing-lever, as his twine had been wont to do while he collected the tickets. But Hetherington Chill and Ermentrude Chuff were nowhere to be seen.

Chuff searched about madly. There was nothing but that shred of pale green on the reversing-lever. He circled the prone machine for some possible thing which one might drop in a hurried flight through the

air. Nothing. He lengthened the radius of his quest. Pestifer's horse lay weakly down against the nearest fence.

The rising sun found Chuff a mile from the dead engine, still fruitlessly searching in an ever-widening circle.



“OUR ANCHEL”



“OUR ANCHEL”

I

DAISY WISHED I WAS A COPPERHEAD

I DON'T know for why t'e women took such a' interest in t'e war. Pennsylvany women don't bot'er much about things outside t'e house. Mebbe it wass becauss they lifed on t'e border, where it wass all t'e time so much red-hot talk. Of course it wass lots of women t'at had no opinion one way or t'e ot'er, an' did n't keer for none—chust went t'e way t'e men-folks of t'e family did. But Daisy had an opinion of her own from t'e start. Eferybody expected her to be a rebel, account all her folks lifed down in Dixie. An' she did n't disapp'int them. All t'e ot'er girls in town wass Union, an' when they found out t'at Daisy wass a rebel they called her Copperhead an' stopped going with her.

Daisy did n't mind much. All she ast wass t'at Harold an' me should stick to her—she did n't keer for t'e rest. Well, it did n't take much persuading for t'at. Anyhow, I expect it wass more jealousy than paterotism with t'e ot'er girls, for Daisy wass enough sight pootier than any of 'em—yes, all of 'em toget'er! An' beaux wass skerce on t'e border in 1862. But it

made Daisy a little sorry when it got so bad t'at t'ey would n't speak to her on t'e street no more,—you could see t'at,—for she wass friendly with eferybody, an' so she said t'at Hal an' me must like her all t'e more to make up for t'e rest. An' it did n't require much persuading for *t'at*, neit'er. She wass one of them girls t'at a feller ken nefer like too much. Not only account her beauty, but also her nice affectionate an' lively ways.

Of course it's some t'at don't like such yeller hair, an' blue eyes, an' white teeth showing all t'e time account she wass nearly always laughing. But Hal an' me liked it an' no mistake. I guess she knowed it, too.

But when t'e war come on, an' her Sout'ern relations got going in an' gitting killed, she did n't show her teeth so much no more, an' got a kind of a sad look on her face.

Hal an' me chust kep' on courting her, not knowing which wass t'e best man an' afraid to find out. Daisy thought it wass account of being sorry for one anot'er. It wass becauss we wass afraid of one anot'er. Yes, we 'd go toget'er an' leafe toget'er, an' watch one anot'er like cats, an' I don't believe Daisy knowed herself which she liked best. I got to acknowledge t'at Hal wass t'e best-looking an' had t'e best manners, an' wass a Copperhead, yit—which suited Daisy best of all. But I had knowed her t'e longest, an' had t'e start of Hal a little. Yit if I 'd 'a' been Daisy *I* 'd 'a' liked Hal best, an' I nefer blamed her for doing it—if she did. *I* liked him better 'an any one I efer knowed. A fact, I did. He wass one them proud, quiet, gentlemanly kind of fellers with black hair an' eyes. Me—

I wass chust a rough, Dutch towhead. Lots of 'em about. Yit—I don't like to say it—I thought Daisy would 'a' liked me best if I 'd been a Copperhead. An', be goshens! I wass so deep in lofe with her t'at I 'd 'a' turned my coat in no time—if she 'd 'a' let me.

"Bob," she says onct while I wass carrying her acrosst a crick, "I wisht you wass a Copperhead."

"Why?" I ast her.

"Oh, account I like you so much now. I 'd like to like you more."

"I 'd do a good bit to be liked a little more by you, Daisy," I says.

"Would you r'ally?" she ast.

"Yes," I says. "To-morrow you 'll see me with a Copperhead breastpin. I 'll turn my coat to-night—soon as it gits dark."

"For me?" she ast.

"Yes, for you," I says, thinking t'at would please her.

"I 'd hate you then," she says, hard as iorn. "Lem me down."

"Hate me?" I says, kind of dizzy.

"Yes, hate you! Hal ain't t'at kind a Copperhead. He beliefes in it."

"Daisy—" I begun to say.

"Lem me down!" she says, twisting out of my arms, turning her back on me, an' splashing out of t'e crick.

I did n't see her for about a week. She kep' out of my way. An' Hal he looked kind of sheepish too. An' then when I did see her she wass going to pass me without a word. I chust naturally stopped her.

"Daisy, I don't believe in it, an' I ain't a-going to be

no Copperhead. But I believe in you. For why you turn your back on me—"

"Yes, yes," she says, kind of sorrowful. "No matter what you air, we shill always be good friends."

It was something funny in her voice.

"Friends?" says I.

"Friends," says she, with her head hanging. "But oh, such good friends—such good friends, *dear* Bob!"

"Yes," I says; "I understand, I expect."

"Yes," she says uneasy.

"T'at's why you did n't want me for no Copperhead, hah? You got one an' had no use for anot'er."

"No," she says; "it had n't taken place then."

"Taken place?" I says. "What you mean?"

"I thought you knowed. You said you understood," she says, gitting pale as t'e moon.

I ketched her by t'e arm—so rough t'at I seen her face show t'e pain.

"Look-a yere," I says; "you don't mean to tell me t'at you 're ingaged with him—an'—an'—nefer tol' me?"

She chust hung her head.

"Well—yereafter," I went on, "I want both you an' Hal to understand t'at it's no quarter with me. I been fair an' square all along, but you stabbed me in t'e back, both of yous. Yes! An' when my turn comes I'll do some of t'at myself."

She ketched me by t'e arm before I could git away.

"Bob—Bob—"

T'at was all she could say. But I seen her heart thumping—an' it wass all over with me onct more. She saw that, too.

"Hal is—square; but I—I ain't," she says. "Blame me. I ast him to ast me—t'e day you made me so mad. He did n't want to. He said he ought to tell you first. But I made him. Bob, I 'm sorry—sorry—you—made me mad t'at—day."

She begun to cry a little.

"Nefer mind," says I; "next to me he 's t'e best feller in t'e whole world."

"Yes," she says.

Then I laughed—not a funny laugh, I ken tell you.

"I expect you chust fooling now."

"Excuse me; I 'm out of it," says I. "Good-by."

"Bob," she says, ketching holt my arm, "you not mad at me?"

"No," says I. "I ought 'a' knowed how it wass going to go. I 'm nobody; I got no feelings!"

"Bob, if we *should* git married sometime—oh, long after this—you won't stay away from me, will you?"

"Let 's talk about something else," says I. "You asting me to haf' fun at my own funeral."

"Yes," she says, an' walks away with her han'kercher to her eyes.

I kep' away from both for a little. You know how things wears off after a while, but t'at wass hard work. Both of them wass so lofely!

An' soon it got pooty much as before. Both of us hanging round Daisy ag'in—only with me it wass different now. I wass kind of reckless, an' had a grudge against Hal t'at I could n't git shut of.

"Say, why don't you fellers go an' fight?" Daisy says one day. "I 'm tired of sass."

"All right," says I; "come along, Hal."

But she looked frightened then, an' I seen t'at she wass sorry she 'd said t'at.

"I did n't mean each ot'er," she says.

"Oh!" says I.

"I 've been thinking about it," says Hal, kind of ser'ous. "I 'll go with you, Bob."

I could see Daisy trimble.

"Well, you kin chust stop thinking about it, Hal," says I. "Daisy did n't mean you—chust me; an' I ain't going, an' you got a better job."

"What 's t'at?" Hal ast.

"Making lofe to a girl I 'm acquainted of."

"Oh!" says Hal, with a nice smile to Daisy. Hal wass n't so quick to see a joke as most people.

"If you go I 'll take your job. You got fair warn-ing," I says.

"You 'll *nefer* git Hal's job!" says Daisy.

"You too bloodthirsty for me. Talk to Hal. He 'll do whatefer you ast him to," says I.

"Efery man in Maryland t'at kin carry a gun is out fighting, they say, an' I 'm chust a-keeping you two yere to—to—"

"To what?" I ast her. "Out with it!"

She laughed an' slapped me.

"Chust to have you both—*about*."

"Oh," says I, "is t'at all? I expected something—"

"T'e Brenizer girls says you 're both afeared—or I 'm afeared—or somebody 's afeared—"

"Well, you ken tell them for me t'at they 're right. I ain't anxious to git shot full of holes an' have t'e wind blowing through an' through me when cold

weather comes—nossir. Hal, why don't you git up an' go, an' get yourself wentilated?"

Hal chust smiled an' said nothing.

On t'e way home I says:

"Hal, you got to go. She says so, an' she owns you; so git along."

"Daisy's right," says Hal. "We got to go."

"We? Like hell!" says I. "Daisy don't own me—not by a long shot."

"Well," says Hal, "I'm going."

"Well," I says, "go an' be durned to you—if you *got* to be a fool—for a woman. She'll forgit you in a month."

"It's my duty," says he.

"Who to? Jeff Davis?"

"Daisy."

I chust laughed.

"How do you make t'at out?" I ast him.

"People's talking about her."

"I know. But what differ does t'at make?" says I.

"Mebbe you don't know what it is?"

"T'at she's a Copperhead? It's chust with her mouth," says I.

"Is t'at all you 'fe heared?" ast Hal.

"Yes," I says; "an' she don't keer, an' I don't keer, an' you don't *need* to keer. She's yourn. But I expect you will keer—account of her—like any ot'er fool."

"It's something else," says Hal. "They don't say it to you, I expect."

"Well," I says, "what t'e hell is it? Try an' not *behave* like a fool, if you air one."

We walked on awhile, an' then he come up clost to

my ear an' kind of whispered—like he was afeared to talk out loud:

"They say t'at *she* 's afeared to send one of us unless she sends us both."

"For why?" I ast him, not understanding.

"Don't you see?"

"No, I don't," says I.

"She don't know which of us she likes best, they say, an' she 's afeared to be left alone with t'e ot'er one for fear—"

I laughed out loud.

"But you 're *ingaged* to her!" says I.

"Yes," says Hal, kind of sheepish; then, "They also say t'at we 're afeared—of—each ot'er."

I did n't say a word—chust kep' on laughing to myself.

We walked on yit furt'er, an' then Hal says:

"Bob, you going?"

I laughed out loud ag'in.

"Well, I guess not—*now*," says I. "I 'm a-going to stay right yere an' show 'em t'at she ain't afeared of *me* an' t'at I ain't afeared of you."

I stopped to laugh ag'in.

"Nossir! I 'm a-going to stay right yere an' show 'em—efery man, woman, an' child—t'at it—"

"*Ain't* so?" ast Hal, kind of breathless.

"T'at it 's *so*," says I, still laughing.

"All right," says Hal, very sorrowful.

We walked on ag'in, an' I begun to feel a little mean.

"Hal," I says, "you better stay at home an' pectect your property."

“No,” he says; “I ’m going.”

“Oh, well, if you will,” says I. “On which side?”

He wass kind of looking ahead, an’ I had to repeat it.

“Daisy’s side—Daisy’s side,” says he.

“I ’m talking about—*war*,” I yells, “not lofe—dam’ you!”

“Oh,” says he, ashamed. “Confederate.”

“U-hu,” I says; “I ’m sorry.”

“Nefer mind t’at,” says Hal.

“Say, if you take t’e ot’er side I ’ll go with you,” says I. “Let ’s see if you *ken* disobey Daisy an’ do t’e right thing.”

“I can’t do it,” says Hal; “it ’s a principle at stake—an’ I might as well say good-by. You ’re not ser’ous to-night. I ’m going airly to-morrow morning.”

“All right,” I says.

We stopped an’ shook hands.

“Bob,” he says, “you ’ll play fair?”

“What you talking about?” says I. “Ain’t *I* always played fair? What business *you* got to ast t’at of me? I ’ll play chust like I please.”

He seemed very ’umble for a minute or two, an’ kep’ on kicking up t’e dirt.

“Well,” he says, “mebbe t’at wass n’t quite fair. She gev’ me t’e chance, an’ I took it without thinking much about you, Bob; t’at ’s so. I haf’ no business to ast you to be fair. Yit I know you will be. She’s all I got. I haf’ not a friend or relation in t’e world but chust her. You haf’ so many friends—”

“Friends,” says I. “Hell! What do I keer for—*friends*! I want her!”

"Yes," says Hal, nice an' soft. He could talk as soft as a woman if he tried. "If she wass to you anything like she is to me, I—understand."

"She wass more! By t'e Lord, she *is* more! You nefer *ken* keer for her as I do! It ain't in you," says I. "An' you took her from me!"

"No," says Hal, chust as soft; "not more—not more. T'at is impossible. Good night, Bob. Good-by."

He held out his hand ag'in, an' I took it an' held it.

"Look yere, Hal," I says; "don't you go away with t'at in your head—about playing fair. Don't you go away with t'e idea t'at Daisy is yourn, an' t'at I'm a-going to stay away from her. By t'e Lord, I'll not do anything of t'e kind. You understand? If I kin git her away from you—"

"I understand," he says, hanging his head. "Still, I *know* you'll be fair. But, Bob, if I don't git back—"

"Shut up!" I says. "You an' me air friends in everything but this. In this we air deadly enemies. No quarter is my motto—you understand? You're warned."

"You a little rough sometimes," says Hal, "but no man efer had a better friend. I'm not afeared."

I noticed how he lingered on, though.

"Bob," he says ag'in, "she liked you before I come. She likes you yit. Of course I know she likes me better. But if I wass n't yere—mebbe— Bob, I'll make a bargain with you—"

"About Daisy?" says I.

"Yes," he says.

"No, you won't!" says I. "I just tol' you it's a fight an' no quarter there. I'd murder for her!"

"Then," says he, soft and kind ag'in, "I 'll chust *tell* you something—because we 're such good friends. If our side loses—"

"I hope it does," says I, hard as iorn.

"I shill nefer come back. By t'at you 'll know t'at she 's—"

"Shut up!" says I.

"Good-by," says Hal. "Bob—she 's our anchel!"

II

BY THE LORD, IT WAS N'T HAL!

WELL, it *wass* about t'e nicest thing t'at efer happened, for me—Hal's going to war. I had Daisy all to myself, an' I soon found out t'at she needed some one bad. Think of t'e temptation—efery day an' hour almost! An' I did n't waste no time nor chances. An' Daisy nicer than efer with t'at little sadness in her eyes! Well, she knowed it as well as I did what *wass* up, an' kep' me straight—as straight as she could—for a while. But efen t'at got to be pooty hard to do. She 'd forgit all about Hal now an' then—women air women all t'e world ofer. But one moonlight night Daisy brought me up to t'e right about face. I r'ally don' know chust exsac'ly how it happened. I expect I went a little *too* fast. We took a walk an' drifted into a little woods, an' t'e first thing I knowed I had Daisy's hands, a-holding on to them like they belonged to me. Daisy must 'a' intirely forgot Hal t'at

night. She let me pull her head ofer on my shoulder. I kissed her. I wass sure I could make her gife Hal up. But chust about t'at time somebody laughed—a kind of "I-tol'-you-so!" laugh—an' Sally Brenizer passed us. Daisy jumped up an' stood there before me, stiff as a poker. In a minute she knowed what I wass up to all t'e time.

"Bob," she says, hard an' cold, "I want you to go away."

"What for?" I ast her, like a fool.

"You know well enough."

She walked out of t'e woods mighty fast.

"It's not a bit of danger, Daisy," says I; "you would n't marry me if I wass made of gold."

She laughed a little. Then her eyes shone.

"No, I shall nefer marry no golden man," she says. "He's got to be flesh an' blood—warm an' tender, big an' brave—"

She stopped as if she 'd said too much.

"But—t'at's *not* Hal," says I. "He's *little*!"

"It *is*! It *is* Hal!" she says, turning on me like a tiger. "An' I want you to *go*!"

"All right," I says; "I'll go right off to war an' git killed. But, by t'e Lord, t'at *ain't* Hal!"

She switched right around an' caught my arm.

"Bob," she says, in a pleading kind of way, "I do not command you to go: I *beg* you—so t'at I may be true—so t'at *you* may not be a traitor. Go. But come back—oh, Bob, come back to—*me*."

She put her head in her hands an' cried like a child. I tried to take her hands, but she got away from me.

"Bob, for God's sake don't touch me!" she says.

"You afeared of me?" I says.

"Yes," she says, "yes; I *am* afeared of you! Oh, t'e Brenizer girls wass right."

"I won't go for t'at, Daisy," says I.

"No," she says. "But you will go becauss you tempt me efery day—efery day to forgit—to forgit. No, you will not go for t'at—but for *me*—an'—an' you will come back—to me an'—an'—Hal."

"To you," says I. "*Not* Hal!"

"You promised to be fair."

"No, I did n't," I says; "an' I nefer will be!"

"Oh, Bob!" she says. "Please—be fair!"

But as I looked there wass something in her eyes t'at she could not conceal, an' it wass gladness—gladness—by t'e Lord!

"I *will* come back to you—*for* you," I says. "After t'e war there will be anot'er fight. It will be yere. You are my all in all. Without you I do not keer to life. If he keers for you t'at much it must be you or—or—something we can't talk about. After this I *will* be fair. But there will be no quarter. I would kill him if he—"

Her head drooped a little.

"Good-by," I says; "you air mine if I win you—his if he does. But no quarter!"

She looked up sudden an' t'e light went out of her face. I held out my hand.

"Good-by," she whispers back.

I left her standing there. An' when I wass 'most half a mile away she mofed for t'e first time. She wafed her han'kercher, an' t'at wass t'e last I seen of her.

III

GETTYSBURG !

WELL, by 1863 we got round to Gettysburg with Hancock, an' on July 3d we wass with Ricketts's Battery on Cemetery Ridge. In t'e morning it wass quiet enough, considering what wass going on, but things did n't look right. We wass on t'e watchout efery minute for trouble. About one o'clock t'e great artillery fight commenced. You 'fe heared 'bout t'e whole thing often enough, I expect. But hearing about it is mighty watery kind of business to them 'at wass it. T'e ole earth trimbled like it wass an earthquake, an' it look like a flea could n't hardly life in such a place. Efery foot of ground wass plowed up with shot, an' it kep' a feller busy dodging to keep his head on. An' then sometimes a feller 'd dodge out of one thing right into anot'er, an' lose it, after all. Well, we did n't let t'e rebels make all t'e noise, I ken tell you. But soon t'e walley in our front got filled with smoke an' we could n't see a thing. T'e only way to locate Longstreet wass by t'e flash of his guns. An' of course t'at 's t'e way he located us. We could see his shells come tearing through t'at curtain of smoke as if it wass made of muslin—efery shell leafing a hole. Well, as I said, we wass on t'e lookout for t'e trouble t'e rebs wass cooking up for us behind t'at curtain, an' soon t'e word come along 'at Ginerall Warren had found out what it wass. He had a signal-station on Little Roundtop abofe an' back of us, an' when t'e

smoke'd git tore by t'e shells he'd take a look through t'e hole. Well, under t'e cofer of t'e smoke Longstreet wass massing a whole division for an assault upon our center! T'e artillery wass ordered to stop firing so 's t'e smoke could clear an' gife us a chance to see 'em. An' when we stopped they knowed t'at we had found out what they wass up to, an' stopped too. It wass quiet as a funeral. An' t'e rebels did n't make no furt'er secret of their plans; chust like they wass sure to git us an' did n't keer no more. A fact, I think they wass anxious to be seen now—so 's to frighten us. They nefer had a notion what for kind of men wass behind them stone walls! Frighten us! They might 'a' knowed better! We'd had a chance, most of us, to git ofer t'at for three years! Well,—excuse me, I git a little excited talking about it,—when t'e smoke cleared, what we saw wass worth looking at—to a soldier, anyhow. Down in t'e walley Pickett's men wass chust mofing out from behind a bunch of red barns about three quarters of a mile away, as gay as if they wass on dress-parade. If I recollect right, they wass singing or cheering, mebbe both. Their arms wass at a right-shoulder shift—as if they did n't intend to use them. Both arms an' uniforms had been cleaned till they shone an' glittered in t'e sun. Oh, I ken shut my eyes an' see it yit! An' it 's forty years ago! About twenty thousand t'e best men in Lee's army walking straight up to our guns—no cover, no shade, an' grape an' canister all ready for 'em an' waiting—straight on our guns, with laughter on their faces! We chust stood an' looked, an' let t'e guns take keer themselves a little. Who would n't? Yere

was twenty thousand men, ten thousand of which would be dead in a couple of minutes! Not a gun had been fired at them yit. Seemed like our artillery was paralyzed; but our men wass only gitting their batteries posted for them—depressing t'e guns all t'e time, lower an' lower as they came on! We made no change. We wass chust behind a little bunch of trees at which they seemed to be aiming. Chust Hunt sent us a few more guns. Soon efereverything wass ready for them—solid shot, shell, grape, an' canister piled right by each gun. They had passed some trees on this side t'e barn an' corrected their alinement, an' were coming on like a beautiful machine. I nefer seen nothing like t'at, an' nefer shill, I expect. Not a man out of step or out of line. I had t'e lanyard in my hand ready. A shell was in t'e gun. Cushing was pointing it. "Fire!" came t'e word; an' twenty lanyards clicked an' twenty shells tore through the ranks below us. I jumped on t'e stone fence a minute to see. A dozen bloody lanes wass cut in their ranks. But they closed up without losing step, an' mofed on ag'in as fine an' sassy as efer. Then it wass "Fire!" ag'in an' ag'in, with t'e same result. Then Longstreet opens on us, eighty or ninety guns. They had come about half a mile under our fire. We could see t'at t'e ranks wass thinner, an' t'at there wass a gray trail behind 'em, where wounded men wass crawling away to shelter. But now they lowered their bayonets an' gev' their yell an' started on a run for our breastworks. "Canister!" says Cushing, an' we let them haf' it. Once, twice, thrice. T'e ranks wass gitting thinner, t'e trail behind thicker. No alinement now, no parade business now,

by t'e Lord God! "Grape to t'e muzzle!" says Cushing, quieter an' quieter all t'e time. We gev' it to them. Once, twice—t'e second time right in their faces as they swarmed ofer t'e stone wall. A shell exploded under t'e gun. Cushing wiped his face. We wass all black. "Canister!" says he, but no one mofed. Efery man of t'e crew wass down but him an' me—an' I wass chust crawling up with a piece of shell in me. He understood, and shofed in a canister himself. I shofed in anot'er. A dozen rebels jumped on t'e gun. But a blast from t'e battery on our right—turned to enfilade 'em—swept them to hell. "Now," says Cushing, "back her a little!" We did so, an' Cushing pulled t'e string. It swept a clean streak through them. "Anot'er!" says Cushing, pulling her back a little more. In went t'e canister. I poured on some priming. Cushing reached for t'e string. But a bayonet through his breast stopped him forever. Yit he tried to reach it twice as he died. Then I jumped for it, but t'e same bayonet stopped me. I 'd 'a' gev' all t'at wass left of my life to pull t'at string. I tried hard to git it, but it wass no use. T'e bayonet wass through my arm, an' t'e man held me pinned down—an' how it did hurt when I stopped trying for t'e lanyard an' remembered! Then I turned on t'e man with t'e bayonet; he pushed me off—me trying to git at him. His face wass blacker 'n a nikker's with powder-smoke, an' it wass some blood-smears on. I expect mine wass as black. T'e only thing I remember of t'at moment is madness—madness—madness! Oh! war is hell! I thought I wass killed myself, an' I wanted to kill—kill as many of t'e defils as I could

before I died. It all happened in a second or two. Of a sudden I wass strong as a bull. I jerked t'e rebel's gun out his hands, got t'e bayonet out my arm, an' tried to smash him with t'e butt. It wass a glancing blow, an' he closed in on me. We went down toget'er. But he wass under, an' I put his own bayonet through him an' laughed,—laughed in his dam' face,—he wass so disapp'inted! But t'e laugh turned to a shifer. T'e gun fell out of my hands. I grabbed t'e rebel an' pulled his face clost to mine. I could n't see no more; he put his hands on his wound for pain, an' opened his eyes a little, an' then a little more an' more, an' I could see in his eyes what he wass seeing in mine. He smiled a little then, an' tried to reach my hand, an' says chust:

"Bob!"

An' I says chust:

"Hal!"

It wass he—Hal—an' a parcel of his men t'at had been fighting us about t'at battery like defils—Hal an' a parcel of his men, t'e only ones t'at efer got acrosst t'at stone wall!

IV

IT WAS WAR

I KNOWED nothing more an' I remember nothing more tell I woke up in t'e field hospital, an' I thank God t'at I do not. Soon some one, in a rattling kind of voice, like he wass waiting for me, says:

"Bob!"

I looked around, an' t'e man on t'e cot next to me wass holding out his hand. I took it an' knowed it wass Hal.

"Can't talk," he says; "lung."

He pointed to it, an' I remembered, an' shifered ag'in.

"Ast 'em—put me yere. Wanted tell you—waiting—you been out—your head—did n't know—wass you."

He p'inted toward t'e battle-field.

"An' I did n't know it wass you," says I, sniffing like a fool.

"Would n't hurt you for—for—"

He had to stop to cough.

"Nor I you," says I.

"Forgife?"

He reached out his hand ag'in, like he wass n't quite sure.

"Forgife!" says I.

He squeezed my hand an' then tried to take his own back. But I held it.

"Forgife *me*," I says.

He looked as if he did n't exsac'ly understand.

"For t'at." I pointed to his breast.

He nodded an' smiled as if it wass nothing.

"It wass war!" he says.

"An' for this, too; I wass n't—fair."

I pulled a daguerreotype of Daisy from my bosom, where it wass fast round my neck by a string, an' held it up to him. "Take it! It belongs to you," I says. He smiled, an' pulled anot'er out of his bosom chust like it.

"I 'll nefer fight ag'in," he says.

"Nor I," says I.

"Efen—if—I git well," he smiled.

"Or if I do," says I.

We rested awhile, an' then he says:

"Bob—you don't mind—t'at I 'm—yere—in your hospital?"

"Hal," I says, "I 'm glad. God bless you!"

"I ast 'em—to put me by you."

He dropped off to sleep then. In ten minutes he woke up an' says:

"Bob—think—Daisy 'd come—if she knowed?"

"Yes," I says. "We 'll send for her."

One day a woman all dressed in black, with t'e cross of t'e Christian Commission on, came to t'e hospital, an' says, soft as praying:

"I haf' paper an' envelopes yere, an' I will write a letter to any one you wish."

"Yes," I says,—it wass about all I could say at t'at time,—an' she set down an' begun.

"Now, do not hurry," she says yit; "I haf' plenty of time, an' I will write efery word you say—no matter how many." I noticed t'at her voice wass soft an' familiar, kind of German, but I did n't suspect a thing.

"Well," I says, "begin it 'Dear Daisy.'"

She wass frightened at t'at.

"'Dear Daisy,' did you say?" she ast me.

"Yes," I says. "For why you skeered so 'bout t'at?"

"Yes—I wass a little frightened," she says. "I knowed a—Daisy. But there are many of t'at name."

"Yes," I says; "but there is only *one* Daisy in this world, anyhow, an' you air going to write to her."

"Yes," she says, very soft an' nice; "*your* Daisy—I understand."

"*Our* Daisy," says I.

She seemed frightened ag'in.

"*Our* Daisy—did you—say?"

"Yes," I says; "it 's two of us."

"Oh—two?"

"Yes," I says; "go on. I 'm gitting tired out."

"Pardon me," she says, an' I thought she wass cryin' a little. "I am ready."

"'Dear Daisy,'" I begun ag'in: "'We air in t'e hospital at a place called Gettysburg. Both of us air. We—'"

She dropped on her knees at t'e side of my bed.

"Oh, *both* of you! Where—where is t'e ot'er?"

An' I knowed she wass crying.

"Now, don't you worry," says I. "You can't cry so nice for efery wounded soldier. It 's too many of us yere. Go on, please."

"But I must know—about t'e—ot'er," she kind of begs. "I must—*must* know!"

I felt her lifting up t'e bandage on my face an' looking at me—a long time.

"Well, then," I says, "there he is—right behind you. Don't wake him up. He sleeps 'most all t'e time. They keep him under t'e influence of something account his pain. Hal—his name 's Hal—he 's my best friend, if he *is* a rebel. I did n't always think so, but I do now; an' Daisy 's t'e best friend of us both. We 're both in lofe with her, an' we both want to marry her. She—she's ingaged to Hal. He's mighty sick. So am I. It don't look like either of us 'll git

t'e chance to marry her. I wass n't fair with him—no, I wass n't. But I 'm sorry now. I 'll be fair after this. He—he ken marry her, an' I 'll go to t'e wedding—by the Lord!"

She wass sobbing right out now—like babies do 'at can't help it. She turned an' looked at Hal, I think, an' then says, says she, sobbing:

"Let us go on with t'e letter, please."

"It wass a fight yere t'e last three days," I tells her, "an' Hal an' me wass both wounded. He on t'e one side, me on t'e ot'er—fighting. It ain't a pleasant story, an' I 'll tell you about it when you come. It 'll take some courage to tell it. But I ken do it. Hal 's asleep alongside of me. He 's too bad hurt to write. An' he 's asleep; t'at 's why I got to do it. An' he must n't be waked up; t'e doctor says so. Daisy, can't you come to see him? He is hurt bad, an' also his side lost. I pity him. You will, too, when you see him. He ast me t'e ot'er day if I thought you 'd come. I says, of course she will—if it 's a thousand miles, instead of twenty or thirty. So please an' come to see your two friends,

"BOB AN' HAL.

"P.S. An' mebbe you 'd marry him right yere? He 'd like t'at; so—so would I—

"HAL, BOB."

She chust took t'e letter an' wrote something below. Then she took off my bandage so 's I could see, an' held it up to my eyes.

DEAR BOB, DEAR HAL: I haf' chust got your letter—an' am yere.

DAISY.

I can't tell exsac'ly what happened in t'e next few minutes. I expect I don't know. An' if you nefer

wass no wounded soldier an' in lofe with Daisy you can't efen imagine it. All 'at I remember is t'at in a little while she wass kneeling between our two cots, with a hand of each in hern, an' it seemed like t'at healed eferthing. All t'e jealousy an' heartburning, all t'e fighting, all t'e trials, all t'e fire an' blood an' waste of life, wass forgot, an' chust t'at little hand an' t'at voice remembered. Chust as if it had all been for this, an' this one joyous moment—an' as if it wass all worth this!

An' happy! I wass happy myself. But to see Hal's face you 'd think he wass in heafen. An' t'at made me happy, too—Hal's happiness.

V

THE VALLEY OF DEATH

SHE stayed right there an' nursed us as no two soldiers efer wass nursed before. An' I kep' gitting better all t'e time account I wass so happy, an' Hal kep' gitting worse for t'e same reason. You see, he would n't an' would n't keep quiet.

T'e doctor tol' me he had a chance before Daisy come, but it wass gone now.

"Well," he says, "what is t'e difference? He'll die t'e happiest man I efer saw." An' he did.

It came in t'e night. Daisy wass sleeping a little, when Hal woke me up. T'e torch was dancing in front of t'e tent, an' I could see t'at his face wass shining in a kind of way t'at wass almost holy.

"Bob," he says, "call Daisy."

I had her there in a minute. She soon seen what wass up. With one great sob she dropped down at Hal's cot an' wass quiet, an' I dropped down aside of her. We wass all awed an' trembly, but Hal he still had t'at light in his face, an' wass smiling up at us like old times—old, old times! How far away they seemed then! Oh, but he looked young an' pitiful! An' I had killed him! Down in my breast I cursed t'e war an' all t'e people who had helped to bring this awful thing about.

"Hal," I says, "I 'm sorry."

"Bob," he says, "it wass war."

"Hal," I says, "God bless you!"

He looked from Daisy to me a little, then back ag'in, his smile gitting brighter all t'e time.

"He has," Hal says then. "He has gifen me t'e two—best friends—any man efer had. T'e—two—best—friends." His eyes got dim, an' he groped with his hands. Daisy put hern in 'em.

He understood.

"T'at 's—right—Daisy."

Then his mind wandered a little:

"Bob killed—me. Did you—know t'at Bob killed—me? If it had n't been war—it would have been—murder—if it had n't—been—war—strange—war—murder—"

We sat there together, without a word, till his hands got cold, and we knowed what had happened. Then I says:

"Daisy."

She turns on me with a look I had nefer seen in her eyes, and says:

"Hush!"

An' so it wass always—hush! until I could n't bear it no more. For I could see it all in her eyes, but could not say a word. An' Daisy, what she did for me now wass for duty—not love.

Chust once she spoke about it.

"Is it true?" she ast.

"I killed him," I says. "But—"

"Hush!" says she, with t'at look on her face ag'in.

"Not one word!"

One day she led me out for a walk. I don't know how it happened, but we both went right to t'e spot. Things had been cleared up a little, but it still looked pretty ragged. We stopped an' slowly faced each ot'er, an' her eyes said, "Where?" I found t'e spot, an' she stooped an' kissed it. I stood tell she got up. Then she took my arm; but I would n't go.

"It wass war," I says.

"It wass murder!" she says.

We stood so without a word a long time.

"T'e sweetest an' gentlest soul t'at efer lifed!" says she.

"T'e sweetest an' gentlest soul t'at efer lifed," says I. Still we stood there.

"I haf' anot'er word to say," says I, "an' yere 's t'e place to say it."

"What is it?" she ast.

"Good-by."

She started a little.

"Come," she says then, an' started to lead me home.

"You too weak yit. I haf' my order. Come!"

I obeyed.

Back over t'e Walley of Death we went, an' I saw

it all once more: t'e smoke, t'e fire, t'e blood, t'e heat, t'e din—shouts of victory, curses of defeat, death. Then it wass war—"glorious war," as they call it. But now it wass bitter, bitter murder! I stopped.

"We part yere," I says. "I can't stand it."

She seemed unhappy.

"Where you going?" she ast me.

"Back to my rigiment," says I.

"You—you said you wass nefer goin' to fight no more?"

"Yes—I said that," says I, "long ago. But now I got to fight—or something. Good-by."

"Bob—"

She seemed about to break down, an' finally held out her hands. I took an' kissed them. She came a little closer an' put up her lips—chust as if I had forced her. But I shook my head an' turned away.

"Not a murderer," says I.

VI

HOME!

WELL, I went back an' fought for two years more—fought like a defil, fought to forgit, to be killed. But two things I nefer could forgit—t'e paleness of her face an' t'e coldness of t'e lips I did n't need to touch to feel. They tell you t'at time cures all things. But t'at nefer got better. I could see t'at face, feel those lips, an' hear t'at voice saying it wass murder in battle.

Yes, as I "murdered" o'ter rebels, God help me! They were all plainer to me on t'e day I wass mustered out than t'e day I left her in t'e Walley of Death at Gettysburg.

I walked home from t'e grand réfiew. It wass only about fifty miles, an' I wanted to go through Gettysburg once more, see t'at spot ag'in, an' go through t'e Walley of Death. It wass harder to find now—t'e spot; but nothing on earth could keep it from me, an' presently I knowed t'at I had my lips on t'e spot she had kissed. An' t'e saddest tears I efer shed dropped into t'e grass where t'e blood of both of us had fallen two years before. Our blood an' her tears!—all for her lofe! An' then I knowed what I had r'ally come for—to kiss t'e spot she had kissed! Well, I had done t'at. An' what now? Home? No! I saw ag'in *t'at* in her eyes. No! I rose an' faced south—t'e way I had come. As I did so a woman stood before me suddenly. I staggered back as if I had seen her ghost, so frail wass she; yit—beautiful—beautiful as an anchel! Beautiful as t'e anchel we use' to call her—Hal an' me. I thought, somehow, of t'e moment I put t'e bayonet through Hal.

She smiled an' held out her arms. I did n't mofe. I could n't. She came slowly toward me. I mofed back. She stopped an' t'e pain I knowed of old came in her eyes.

"Bob—oh, Bob," she whispered, "wass it too much to *efer* forgife? I *know* now. *You* did n't tell me. I would n't let you. I am glad you nefer tried. But I *know*. Yes, it wass war."

Ag'in she came on. I put her away. Something

seemed bursting inside me. For two year I had kept it down. But now it broke out.

"You haf' broke my heart," I says.

"Then let me heal it, Bob," she says. "Oh, Bob," she begs, "take me—take me—take me! I am so tired waiting for you—so tired waiting to confess—to confess—t'at I came to meet you!"

"Confess—confess what?" I says.

"Oh, Bob, a woman must confess in some one's arms—on some one's breast—in some one's heart—some one who is brafe enough an' strong enough to forgife her when she is—is—*wrong*. To lofe her after she has cleaned her heart! I wass a girl then—almost a child. I am a woman now, an' I—oh, Bob—I haf'—suffered. I haf' suffered! Yes, I am a woman now. Look at me!"

I did. If I had lofed her before I adored her then. She wass a woman—t'e most splendid to me t'at God efer made. I kneeled down an' kissed t'e hem of her frock.

"You *are* our anchel!" I says.

An' then—I don't know how it happened—I did n't say a word—I could n't—I did n't mofe, but she knelt down there, too. An' then, somehow, my arms opened ag'inst my will, an' when she wass in them, an' trying to git closer an' closer, how could I let her go? An' her confession? She did n't make it tell long afterward, and it wass this:

"I wass t'e guilty one, becauss—I lofed *you* and *pitied* him."

"Bob—come home!"

We turned homeward. But she went back to t'e spot we knew. I did not look to see what she done. When she reached me ag'in she put her arm in mine an' held it close while we crossed onct more t'e Walley of Death.



THE LADY AND HER SOUL



THE LADY AND HER SOUL

I

THE PLACE WHICH THROBBED

ON the porches of the Crazy-Quilt House (which is not its name) the ladies who knitted called Grammis queer because he chose to reside in his seven-foot sneak-box much more than at the hotel where they knitted. Well—I, also, would have chosen as Grammis did; so there is a pair of us! Perhaps you will join us and make it three!

Fancy, I beg of you, speeding under the stars, or a moon, or in the darkness, upon one's back, with four miles of water on each side of one—the sea beyond!

Then fancy a hot room, smelling of coal-oil lamps in which women's voices shrieked, while some one played with "magnificent execution."

Now! Are there not three of us?

And what do you think of Grammis? I like him well. For I, who am not wise, solved Grammis in an hour. He needed a comrade, and presently she came.

Grammis spent that night on the hotel porch—and four ambrosial others. He said very little, and kept his rocker where he might adore her best.

Have you seen those busts from Vienna? There will be the head of a woman with dainty lips, long-lashed eyes, and much splendid hair—but not a shade of soul!

Such was she! So the ladies who knitted whispered when they saw Grammis falling in love.

Suddenly, on that fourth night, she gave Grammis his chance:

“What have you been doing all these nights while I have chattered?”

“There is a place which throbs when you look upward; it is here—”

Grammis had almost pointed it out to her—when he awoke.

Miss Arras yawned.

“I suppose it is quite midnight!” she said. “Good night, Mr.—Mr.—”

“Grammis,” said Grammis, innocently.

Miss Arras laughed into her handkerchief, and went to bed.

Grammis’s watch showed him, when he was in a condition to observe it, that the hour was ten.

Grammis spent the next night on the bay—and then many of them. For one had come to the Crazy-Quilt House who was neither silent nor foolish. But then, neither did he observe that she had a spot under her chin which throbbed!

She had remembered that. She would tilt her chin at the mirror—and be vexed! Then think of the gentleness of Grammis’s smile, and think him a fool, and sigh, quite as if she liked him better and better for it.

II

NO SOUL HAS SHE

GRAMMIS, coming up from the bay one night very late, heard her on the hotel porch telling something to Garran, the new-comer—alone. And this was the end of it:

“And I said, ‘It must be quite midnight, Mr.—Mr.—’ I’d forgot his name!”

“And he told it to you, eh?”

They laughed merrily here.

“And then went off like a shot?”

“Like a shot.”

Garran laughed alone.

“And it was only ten o’clock?”

“It was not yet ten.”

More laughter, but all Garran’s.

Grammis, there below the porch, did not care that the light shone full in his face. And her words quite passed him. She was in evening dress. He could see the place which throbbed. And he had but one adjective for her—glorious!

Do you perceive how poor Grammis was in adjectives?

And, somehow, he understood something which differed from her words. It made him warm at the heart! He did not care for her words!

She looked at Grammis. Grammis looked at her. He smiled and passed on. He heard her say:

“That is he.”

Garran looked over the balustrade.

It seemed that Garran found a Waterloo.

"She has no soul—not an atom!" he said to Grammis.

Grammis stared at him. It had vast speech—that stare of Grammis's!

"She said she has never felt an emotion. And I knew it before she told me!"

"How?" asked Grammis.

"Look at her!" answered Garran.

"Look at her? I have."

"Well?"

Grammis thought of the place which throbbed, and of that one adjective of his, and was silent.

"You're a pair!" said Garran. "Nothing I said made her wink an eyelash. It does n't make you do so. When I was done she said what she did to you —'good night!'"

And he went away on the three-o'clock train—Garran.

III

GRAMMIS'S WEAPON

That was in Happy June: This,
This was in Triste September.

ONE day, far from that other, he found her on the solitary little pier when he came to loose his boat.

"You should not sail so much alone. Suppose something should happen—to the boat?"

Grammis only smiled and lifted his cap—showing the head which was so much better to see than the cap.

“If there were a few feet more to it I would risk going with you—in case you should ask me!”

“I wish there were a few feet more to it,” said Grammis, dealing lightly with the impossible.

“For that beautiful saying, I shall go without the additional feet.”

She moved to get in.

“Mrs. Grundy?” suggested Grammis, with humor, still dealing with the impossible.

“Does not live here now,” said she. “It is September. You and I are all!”

She was standing above him now. His hand was upon the double hitch at her feet. Grammis could have laid his forehead upon them—and done it like a knight. They were such beautiful feet!

“The builder of this boat did not foresee the possibility of such felicity. He built it for only one!”

“All men are fools,” said the lady, irrelevantly.

“Besides, it is dangerous,” replied Grammis.

“I am going,” said Miss Arras, “mainly because you don’t want me.”

Grammis did not believe it.

Her eyes saw this.

“Your hand, please?”

It was her foot he was to give his hand to—which he did.

“Yonder,” she said, pointing to the channel, and took the sheet-rope and the tiller before Grammis could reach them.

"There is quite a sea on out there," Grammis warned.

She pointed for the head of Bonnet Island.

"And the boat is overloaded—"

"I know everything you do—" she snapped.

Gentle Grammis, terrified, looked quickly up. The girl laughed and finished.

"—about this *boat*—and—this *bay*. Stop it! Enjoy yourself!"

It was good to be so suddenly happy, and Grammis laughed with her—at himself.

"Take the tiller," she said suddenly. "I'm tired of it, and you bother me!"

It was a feat of seamanship to exchange places. He had to hold her hands to steady her—all on account of the sea which was up to within a half-inch of the wash-boards. But at last he dropped her safely into the small cockpit. To do it he had to take her firmly in his hands at the waist. She laughed at him. But nothing could deny Grammis the knowledge that when he did it her nostrils swelled. It *might* have been for ecstasy! Anyhow, Grammis also was very happy. She saw this.

"Grammis," she said savagely, "don't be a fool."

Grammis promptly blushed.

"Grammis," Miss Arras went on, "I have a friend who came out three years ago. She was brought straight from her convent to her first assembly. She thought men gentle, but she found them brutes. She had hope for the next winter. But no. And the next. No. All brutes. Say, Grammis, now she prefers them to be brutes. She can treat them as—brutes. Grammis, be a brute."

"I 'm a brute without trying," laughed happy Grammis.

"You!"

Grammis again hastened to blush.

"All men—are—brutes—beside such—a woman—"

"Ah, *such* a woman! Out of the convent!"

"You!" said Grammis, desperately.

She laughed stridently. But Grammis's honest eyes were suddenly upon her, and she spoke with gentleness:

"Grammis, do you know what is the most terrible weapon a gentleman can turn against a worldly woman?"

"No," said Grammis.

"The one you have turned against me."

Grammis stared.

"Me? Against *you*?"

"His gentleness."

"Eh?" gasped Grammis. "I?"

"You!"

She began to sing:

The twilight lingers on the rose —
The danger-lamps of love are lit!
Gods! what care I? My heart outgoes
Love's peril for the love of it!

IV

LOVE'S DANGER-LAMPS

It was Grammis's own song, and she was laughing at him! And, to Grammis, his songs were very sacred

—perhaps only because they were melody—perhaps because of the place they came from—far, far within!

Grammis looked uncomfortable—hurt.

Did I tell you that he was a composer?

“Stop it!” she cried. “I knew it—and sung it—and *loved* it—before I knew—you—or sailed with you—or—” Then she laughed.

Grammis was sure she was guying him.

“Grammis!” she cried brutally, “sing, you—you—beggar! Sing your own song—for *me*!”

To the astonishment of Grammis, she choked at the last word. And when he looked up she was holding her throat. Her mouth seemed to be laughing at her eyes!

“The spray!” she cried, joyously wiping them. “Sing, you—beggar!”

This time it was an unadulterated laugh.

Grammis felt that he ought to be offended. But he knew it was impossible. He feared that he should sing if she said it again.

And she said it again:

“Sing, you—beggar! Your own song! for—*me*!”

My heart outgoes where danger lies,

And *you* are — Captain, dear;

Its Waterloo is in your eyes —

It lies in prison there!

sang Grammis, with great beauty.

At the third stanza they sang together—and could scarce do it for laughing, which caught in their throats upon something else. Grammis sang a tenor which was extremely personal with emotion. You

know how easily music reaches one's soul, if it come from one's soul!

Anyhow, before the end, quite, Miss Arras cried out to Grammis, breathlessly:

"Grammis! For God's sake—stop!"

Grammis did not in the least understand.

"Why?" he begged to know.

"Why? Your voice is—horrible!" said Miss Arras.

This was what he sang:

Oh, be a generous victor, and I 'll be a captive true;
Give me the heart I need so much,
Since I have none and you have two!

Yet, as he stared,—for he knew that his voice was not horrible,—Miss Arras leaned forward and touched him, and said very softly:

"Grammis—oh, Grammis!"

But then, when Grammis had dizzily decided that she meant to be kind to him, she added:

"My feet are all wet!"

"And you are all happy to-day," he smiled down at her.

"'At my expense,' you 're adding. But you *might* be mistaken. I am always willing to pay for what I get."

Grammis prayed that he might be mistaken.

And then, with sudden joy:

"Oh-h-h! The water has reached my ankles!"

Grammis paled and thought of bailing. But how could he? She filled the boat!

She laughed at his distress—understood it.

"Grammis, it's glorious!" she cried into his happy face.

Grammis's one adjective! In her mouth!

"Now my knees!"

"Something must be done!" cried Grammis, savagely.

"Yes!" laughed Miss Arras.

V

"REMEMBER THEN WHAT I AM NOW"

BUT the little pumpkin-seed boat plunged into the channel—cut out of the green waters as cleanly as a country road through woods. Spray wet her hair.

"No!" she cried out to it. "I hate that! I want to look my best to-day—the best in all my life! And how can one look one's best with one's hair bedraggled?"

His eyes questioned.

"I may drown! And you may survive—and see me! I will have a green complexion! Look at me—look! Remember then what I am now!"

Grammis's one word fled through his fancy,—glorious!—and was insufficient now.

He put an oilskin about her. His face brushed her hair. He kissed it. She detected him.

"Remember *that*, too, when you take me out," she laughed, and fought the oilskin for a moment.

"I don't want to be dry." Then, suddenly surrendering, she said: "But I *do* want to see you button it about me!"

But at that sort of thing no one could excel Grammis. He buttoned it at the very place which throbbed. He had to tilt her chin for room!

"Grammis," she cried, "you hurt me—hurt me! And oh, I am happy, happy, happy!"

She caught his hands madly away from her throat, and held them. Then, with a riotous laugh, she kissed each one and flung it away from her with force!

"Grammis!" she laughed. "What a fool you are!"

And again:

"Grammis, I hate you! And I ought n't to. For you are all that stands between me and a watery graveyard!"

Yet again:

"Grammis—you make me shiver!"

Once more:

"I wish *I* could be a fool!"

And then he did what was perilous, and what she did not expect. He drew the hood of the oilskin over her hair and tucked it in under its edge. And his hands touched her face.

It made her breathless.

She struck his hands away. She wilfully drew a huge lock forth and let it fly over her face!

And the oilskin was new, yellow,—the hood was crimson-lined!—her hair another yellow. Her face was a flower.

VI

"BECAUSE I LOVE YOU—BECAUSE I LOVE YOU"

"STOP it!" cried Miss Arras, though there was nothing to stop. "Tenderness in a man is horrid, Grammis. It hurts!"

"When it is to a woman?" asked poor Grammis.

"I told you men were brutes!"

"To you?"

"Yes!"

She almost shouted it with savagery. Then:

"I am that convent girl!"

"You!"

"Why are you gentle with me, Grammis, when it makes me shiver?"

"Do you want an answer?"

"Yes."

"An honest one?"

"Yes—you would n't give any other! You could n't, Grammis! Look into my eyes as you answer!"

"Because—" he challenged.

She defied:

"Because?"

"I love you."

He was looking far away over her head. She looked only at him. Something she had fiercely battled against went out in a long sigh. Silence.

"Grammis, what do you see?" she asked, rising.
"Look—at—me!"

His hand, strong and gentle, put her back.

"Don't move. Or—we will—both—get very wet!"

The boat tried to dive to the bottom. Grammis flung himself half over the stern, and she stood up.

But more water came over.

"Above my knees," she whispered happily.

"But one of us can get home in this boat," said Grammis. "Keep her head to the swell—exactly this way!"

He put his knife into the deck where the tiller rested.

She did not touch the thing. She did not even stoop to scorn the danger.

"Grammis," she smiled, "it was my fault."

"Then—God bless you for it!" Grammis smiled back at her. "Good-by. Stick to the boat!"

"It was so great a thing—it is so great a thing—"

"Stick to the boat!" cried Grammis.

"And you?" asked she.

"Swim," said he. "It is easy. Good-by!"

"Stop!" It was a command, as he was going over, which had to be obeyed; for something for which Grammis's very soul had listened spoke in it.

"I'm as good a swimmer as you. Grammis, neither you nor I can swim those four miles."

And then—there—Grammis saw in that splendid face what the ladies who knitted had thought impossible. And perhaps Grammis's eyes replied—he had no voice.

For she answered him:

"Grammis, you and I will go back in this boat—together! Or we will sink with it—together! That is what I came for. That we might be—together! Grammis, I love you!"



THE BEAUTIFUL GRAVEYARD



THE BEAUTIFUL GRAVEYARD

I

THE MOGI ROAD

ON the night of the last day of the Feast of Lanterns, Snowflake went down to the sea. It was six miles. She wished to get there about an hour before the tide would go out. It was a quiet bay between boulders—not much larger than the pond in Fuda's garden—a little to the north of Mogi—toward which she was going. And she chose to walk rather than take a kuruma, because it was more joyous, and she more alone, that way. She was dressed in her most splendid apparel. Her most intimate garment—yumoji, it is called—was of the softest silk ever woven. Her jiban was a little more splendid. It had plum-blossoms embroidered upon it. Finally, her furisodé was splendid enough for a princess. And all were white and new; for all were wedding-garments. Also, her face was exquisitely enameled with oshiroi, and her lips were very red with beni. And her hair had been newly dressed—so that it looked like one of those ivory carvings you have seen—in the fashion of

the hana-yome—the flower-wife. In it were superb kushi, nemaki, kanzashi—quite as if she were rich. In her left hand she carried a costly branch of shikimi—tree of purity, tree of the Blessed Dead. On her right arm she carried a ship. It was woven of barley straw, and was more perfect and beautiful than words of mine can tell. The sails were of that same gossamer silk of her yumoji, and had on them a splendid death-name in scarlet. Its cargo was of fruits, flowers, food, saké, a samisen—everything in miniature which a soul coming back to earth might wish. And tucked away in the ship, where he for whom alone they were meant might find them, were glowing love-messages, that the voyager's journey back to the Meido away from her might not be altogether sad.

The way was long and dark, for the moon just showed herself, as if afraid, above the hills. But Snowflake knew it well. Had she not traveled it seven times thus laden? So she went on, with her face ever in one direction. Very joyously she walked, holding her garments well out of the dust, that they might be pure when she arrived.

First were the streets of the labyrinthine City of Hills. Here and there was a dim andon, just aglow, in an upper chamber. Once a strain of music with some laughter. The whine of a dog—a solitary guardian—was all she remembered until the city was past. She did not like the city. Then the Mogi road. That was better. There was more solitude. It was uphill, past the bamboo grove, the shrine to Binzuru, the little temple of Hoto-Gisu, to the yadoya of the Celestial Summit. There was revelry at the tea-house.

Shadows of dancing women and applauding men were moving on the screens. At her approach the tea-girls came hurrying forth with shrill calls of invitation. Snowflake's face did not change, except to smile a little more ecstatically. They knew her, and her errand; and each understood. So they put their hands reverently before their faces and retreated to the wistarias, and were very silent until she was long past.

Thence the road was downhill to the sea. And the moon might have shown Snowflake, even with her grudging light, had she cared to see, things very beautiful. Below, at her back, was the sleeping, glimmering city. Up on the clouds was the pink light of it. Sloping upward, to the right and left, were terraced mountains. Here and there was a shrine which the moon picked out, or a temple gleaming red, or an uplifted tori, or a pagoda—man's punctuation of God's page. And all the vast darkness was lit with the lanterns to the Blessed Dead. Like myriads of glow-worms they were, transforming the mountain into something inconceivably beautiful. She could have seen where the poor lived,—even such as she,—for there would be but one lantern, or two, no more. And where the rich lived, for there were glowing bunches and festoons of them, and here and there those of carved stone which lined the entrances to estates. These made splendid vistas in the blackness, and the whole of it glowed tenderly to the skies. But her face was turned toward the sea. She saw vaguely only what was before her—a canal-like road, hugely walled and patched in the greens of rice and bamboo and barley. Beyond, dimly, were seen the lights of Mogi. She

shivered a little as she thought of Mogi. For there once a sei-yo jin—a west-ocean man—had tempted her, and Ishihari, with a whispered word, had saved her. It was then and there that she had loved him. And when the place of her tryst with him had to be selected, she chose Mogi, that she might pass through it to him in death as she had done in life. This was her penance. And beyond all, a ghostly glimmer, was the beloved sea. Presently she came to Mogi. For the first time she paused a little as her penance approached. Music and laughter were everywhere—laughter that jarred. The amado were not up, and lights flashed and gleamed, and would until morning put them out. But there were no lanterns to the Blessed Dead. She remembered that Ishihari had called it, on the day he had saved her, a place of harlots. To-night penance was not joyous. To-night she could not pass through Mogi to Ishihari without a sense of contamination. She flitted as a shadow around the village to the north, and thus came to the houses of the fishermen she knew. These—all of them—slept after their fishing. But there were lanterns to the dead here. Their little hamlet always slept when she saw it; but always the dead were remembered.

II

THE BAY AMONG THE BOULDERS

AND so she came at last, quite without weariness, to her little bay among the boulders, and, sinking

softly to the earth, looked out at the mist upon the sea. For this was her trysting-place with the soul of her dead lover. Together they had chosen it while yet he lived. And the gods had ratified their choice.

Wistfully she looked, but not doubtfully. It was out there, toward Takaboka, in the green mist, that he was wont to come. This the gods who knew them both had granted. The moon was on the top of the emerald rock, pushing up from the sea, where the Christians were killed so many long years ago—Takaboka. But on the one side, and all about where the sea touched, it was dark, with only the ghostly glimmer of a wave now and then. It was there, on the side away from the moon, that the mist always rose.

Every year she came here at the Feast of the Blessed Dead, on the last day. Every year there was a new and more splendid soul-ship to bear his soul home. Every year her furisodé and all her wedding-garments, from the nemaki in her hair to the gaeta on her feet, were new and pure. Every year she came there immaculate as ice. Yet every year she was a little more poor, a little less in love with life. What did she do from year to year with her wedding-garments? She burned them—burned up all their splendor. The ashes of each of the seven years which had passed since he died were ranged in a little row in the pretty garden of her house—buried in bronze caskets, the most beautiful she could buy. But they were also in her Beautiful Graveyard, and that was in her heart. If you had asked her neighbors about Snowflake, they

would have pointed to their heads to tell you that she was gently and honorably insane. But she was quite sane.

Presently she rose and felt her garments. They were not pure enough in which to receive her ambassador from heaven. Always it was thus at the last—always she fancied that the dust had soiled them and her a little. It was the quiet bay. Not an eye could see, unless the great lantern of the sea-light away below might be an eye. One by one she took the pretty garments off and removed the dust. Then she put them up on a boulder, and the little ship and the branch of shikimi upon the top of them, and shyly, as the spirit bride she was, watching the darkness lest it might spy upon her, slipped into the lapping water. Slowly she sank into it, like some fairy of another age. Then she came forth and poised upon the edge, listening again. And, in the blackness, she was like the sudden rebirth of the Dragon King's daughter, waiting again for the vanished Urashima—him to whom four hundred years of joy were but as one day without joy.

Then she fancied a noise, and flew to the shadow of the boulder. Thence she emerged presently, clothed again.

"Perhaps it was he!" she whispered. "Am I late? A bride should not be late."

She bent and looked at the marks of the water on a rock.

"No," she said; "I am not late. The tide is still rising."

III

SNOWFLAKE

SHE lit a candle at the bow of the ship of straw, a tiny bronze censer at the stern, and gently pushed it into the water, mooring it to her own hand by a silken cord. She watched it coquetting with the small waves a moment, then set her face to the mist out on the sea. Presently the smoke of the incense formed a halo about her dainty head which the candle lighted vividly. But all about was darkness. Slowly, as she looked, a clairvoyant change came into her face. The eyes did not close, but they saw nothing on earth.

"Come!" she whispered, "come! I am here—I, Snowflake. Harai-tamai kyome-tamae. I am very clean, and to-night I am again your bride."

Thus she looked a long while, repeating the invocation, whispering the invitation. And presently she saw something out there.

"Ishihari," she whispered, "it is I, your Snowflake. I am come with my soul full of beautiful thoughts to speak to you. All the year have I thought them. And now, come closer! Oh, can you not come closer? Perhaps after a while. But that is strange. See, I hold out my arms for you—I, Snowflake. Will you not enter? For to-night we are in the Beautiful Graveyard once more, and there is newness there. That is what we used to call it, even while you lived—in the other life on earth. And do you not remember the first night you came into my heart and told

me about yours? You were dead then but a little while, and I knew not but that you had already been reborn into another life, a life away from mine. But you came into my heart then, and told me about your Beautiful Graveyard, and that you did not wish to be reborn, that you might keep your tryst with me every year. And afterward you came and went in my heart at will. And that was sweeter than it had been in life. For then you did not always come when I wished. But now you are there always—always. That, I think, is your home, dear one—is it not? And always you bring joy. Oh, they ask me what it is that shines in my face. And when I tell them it is you, they smile and point to the forehead as if I were mad. But they do not know—they do not know. They have no Beautiful Graveyards—they never heard of ours.

“You have told me everything which is buried in *your* Beautiful Graveyard—everything. It is vastly larger than mine, because everything that was beautiful for you is dead—everything but me. But in my Graveyard every beautiful thing lives. And shall I tell you again what I have in my Beautiful Graveyard? Yes? Then, first are you—not dead, but with a face like a god and a voice like some creature that speaks sweetly in the night. You came there long ago, only I knew it not. You came first as a little boy with a round head and eyes which looked wonderingly out into a world you were not meant for. No! you with your dreams and your sweetness were the gods’ before you were born. And that is why you have not been reborn: the gods wish you as you are. And there with you is your mother, beautiful as the goddess of

the sun—never another was so beautiful as yours; she smiles from her head to her feet. And you are there when you got to be a man, as they told me. With two swords, two souls, and a queue. But you never were a man—you were always a god. Perhaps you were as that man they call Christ beyond the west ocean—on earth but for the sins of the world. That was in your eyes—that look of sadness. So, at least, I have seen it pictured. And I am there now. I have a little timorous smile for you. Alas! I am but a shadow; so little was I in your life then. But next I have you there with my hands in yours and your eyes in mine. And you are asking me a question I could not answer with my lips, though my soul spoke to yours even then. For have I not told you, and have you not told me, how I went about the world seeking a soul to match mine, and how I found it not till you—you came? And then for the first time in all my life I understood, and likewise you—you understood. Then I knew that you were meant to mate with me. For thus it is in this strange world—nothing lives alone.

“For some there must be many souls—even as many as the Lord Shaka gives—even nine. But for me and for you there was but one. There never could have been, there never can be, another. We knew the moment and the place, as the two metals put side by side will draw together with a power of the gods we call magnetic.

“I could not go through the city of my penance to-night. But that also is in the Beautiful Graveyard

—that moment when your whispered word saved my soul, and when I gave it to you, who had long possessed it, as your price, and you gave me yours. Then I am there in those garments of white which you know—but you are not there. You are not there in your wedding-robcs. But there is the messenger of your death—and then no more. I wait and wait and wait. And, O Ishihari, I shall always wait. For if you can linger in the dark Meido, deny yourself heaven, Nirvana, death in life, absorption into the essence of the Lord of Life, just that you may on the last day of the Feast of the Blessed Dead keep your tryst with me—if you can do that, surely I can wait here on the earth. But, O Ishihari, sometimes it is scarce to be borne! Sometimes I catch myself with my finger on that spot in the neck where one can die painlessly. Sometimes—but then, O Ishihari, I think of my Beautiful Graveyard and go there. Then do I not wish to die. For you are there with all the joy of life in your face—you! And is there anything better in the heaven you now know? Is there anything better than the touch of your hands, the sound of your voice, the look of your eyes? And that is the last and best; for I will not have you there dead.

“Do you remember how, in your Beautiful Graveyard, you kept the most beautiful place for me—oh, the most beautiful of all? You said that because I was snowflake fragile, because I was the most exquisite and evanescent of them all, I should be over and above them all. So have I kept mine for you, because you were bravest—most godlike. Oh, but I am

there by your side—a little widow unwedded, whose hair lies even now upon your own dead knees, except that which the wind blows at the shrine. I saw her come there into my Beautiful Graveyard—the little widow, as if I were not she. Sad were her eyes, bowed was her head, slow were her steps. But that is beautiful, too. Yes, widowhood is very beautiful—widowhood like mine. For are not you there? And can she not close her eyes and feel the grasp of your hands? Can she not open them and suddenly catch your smile? And even, when she listens patiently for long, long whiles, may she not hear your voice? And that is most beautiful of all—to hear your voice like the temple bells, to hear it speak my name again: ‘Snowflake! Snowflake! Snowflake!’ For you would not have the name my parents gave me, but had it Snowflake. Ah, do you not remember?”

IV

THE LAST NIGHT OF THE FEAST OF THE BLESSED DEAD

SHE leaned slowly out over the sea. A sudden and more excessive joy possessed her face. The flame of the little candle flared up as if to light its rapture; the incense scented all the air anew.

“I hear it now—I listen—I hear it now! Ani-San! Come into my arms! Come! I know that you are out there where the green mist is. But why will you not come? Am I—oh, all the gods!—am I no longer pure enough for you who come back from heaven—

ah, perhaps from the long Nirvana—to keep your tryst with me on earth? Oh, come into my arms and tell me that my heart must not break—that still you keep your tryst, and ever will. I am as worthy of you as I can be. I want to come. But at the last Feast of the Dead, again you told me no, for fear of the vast darkness of the Meido. So I have stayed on earth to keep the tryst with you. And will you not—oh, can you not? I am old, and you are young, for the dead grow no older; but my soul is all the same. And it was with our souls that we loved, was it not? True, your eyes were like wells of love. True, your forehead was as a tablet at a shrine. True, your head was crowned as was the godlike soldier Yoshitsune's. I have made a little poem for you. Listen!

“O love, how wondrous fair
Chill death hath wrought in thee!
I touch thy clouldlike hair,
And in its shadows see
A mistlike glimmer, such
As, living, never met my happy touch.

“Come! I wish to tell you what my Graveyard has gained in the year I have waited. Do you know the pine-tree where your soul comes when the wind is high? Well, it is there, and the samisen you taught me how to play. The little cage in which once was a bird—now dead. Not the bird is there, because it is dead. And another little casket of ashes. Come, let my earthly arms feel you. Ah, you come! I see you among the mists!”

She sank on the sand. The sea lapped upward and

made wet her wedding-garments. The waves swept caressingly about her feet. Her arms went out—out to their utmost.

“Oh, come! I see your eyes shine now; I hear your step; I feel your breath, your hands. Come—come—come!”

She slowly closed her arms. Her head fell forward and rested as if upon something within them. Thus she knelt, trance-like, speaking no more, very long—she knew not how long. Then the sun shot a single warning javelin above the sea.

“Not yet,” she whispered, “not yet. Yes, when the sea shows pink yonder—yes. But give me the uttermost moment. Ishihari, I have waited and toiled all the year for this. I shall wait and toil another year and another and another, and ever when the Feast of the Dead comes again, again I will meet you; again my garments will be new and clean and myself pure; again I will open my arms for you. And, O beloved, again you will come within them—will you not? And so it shall be till I meet you in the Meido. Oh, I shall know you in all its vastness. For you will hold out your hand for mine, will you not? And you will lead me, will you not? You who know the way, you will lead me who do not through all the darkness and terrors into heaven, then to Nirvana, then to the bosom of the Lord of Life. I would die for the chance of coming to you, but that you tell me nay; and that, because you might not see, in the darkness you might miss my hand. Ah, that is right—very right. And I shall live till I am old. For here I can be yours and you can be mine on the last night of the Feast of

the Blessed Dead. But there you might miss my hand."

Suddenly she moaned and unwillingly opened her arms.

"Oh, then farewell, my beloved, farewell! The soul-ship is ready—the tide goes out. And is it not more beautiful than the last? And so it shall be every year—more and more beautiful.

"Frail it is, and its sails are of mere gossamer. But it will bear you back to heaven, and when three hundred and sixty-four days are past it will bring you to me again. Farewell!—oh, farewell, my beloved, but to come again."

She let the silken cord glide through her fingers, and the soul-ship moved out with the tide. The little light glimmered and danced and coquetted with the waters, returning and then dashing further away each time, until she could see it no more. Only the smell of the incense was left.

"Ani-San, beloved, are you still there?"

She strained into the grayness which was lighting from beyond, and something answered her.

She smiled, looking straight out to sea, smiling still in the face of the risen sun.

LUCKY JIM



LUCKY JIM

I

THE CHAIN-GANG

AS the chain-gang was shuffling past it was stopped by the whipping-boss. Some one was to be flogged. The boss pointed with his "cat" to a spot a little in advance of the line, and said briefly:

"Lucky Jim!"

The whole line started with surprise. Jim had never been whipped. There had been no occasion for it. He had never disobeyed an order in the twenty years of his confinement.

Jim stepped to the spot indicated, and at a motion of the boss's thumb the rest of the gang went on.

They stood quite silent—Jim and the boss—till the clanking of the shackles had ceased. Then the boss struck the lash of his whip into the dust at his feet.

"Er—Jim—"

The convict raised his head. The eyes of the two

men met. It was not to be the "cat," that was plain. But what, then? Jim had grown almost incapable of emotion; but this vague question came into his remnant of a mind. What could it possibly be? His superior was extracting from his pocket a document. Now, as he unfolded it, Jim could see a gilt seal in the corner.

"Er—Jim—yo'—pardoned."

Jim's heart gave a leap. But only because of the mystery with which the boss had invested it all. For he did not understand. The action of his heart made him a trifle dizzy. It had given that breathless leap quite often of late, and once or twice Jim had wondered whether something were not out of order there. He perceived, presently, that the whipping-boss was tendering him the paper. He took it gingerly—as one does a thing capable of mischief.

"What 's dat yo' says, marster?"

"Yo' pardoned."

"Poddoned? What 's dat, marster?"

For Jim had been born of slave parents, and had never been to school.

"Don' yo' know?" asked the boss, with a laugh.

Jim shook his head. The vocabulary of the mine was limited. No one spoke except upon some sort of compulsion. One was likely to suffer if one did it unwisely. Indeed, they did not think much. The places of their minds seemed to become vacant after a while. At first this was hard, but finally it came to be a condition of peace, and Jim had more time to be bestialized than any of the rest.

They were all life convicts. But life was short here—to all but Jim; he had outlived all who were in the mine when he came, and most of those who came after he did. The mine had been his home for twenty years—and he was only twenty-nine.

"It means that yo' kin go home," the whipping-boss explained.

"Home—home?" repeated Jim, vaguely. "I kin go home, kin I?"

"Yes," said the boss; "git along, now."

The convict started giddily away. Only a step. The shackles were still on his feet. With a laugh, the boss unlocked them and kicked them off.

"Now," he repeated, "git along."

Jim did not stir.

"Well, why don' yo' git out?"

"I guess, marster, ef yo' don' min', I 'll stay a li'l' longer—jis till I fin' out wher' 't is—home, sah."

"No, yo' won'," said his boss. "Yo' 'll git out right now. Anythin' yo' want tek 'long with yo'?"

This was a command, and Jim obeyed it.

"Yassir—ef yo' please, marster."

"Well, go an' git it, an' I 'll show yo' the way out."

Jim went through a mile of the mine to a shelving rock which had served for his bed many years. From some hiding-place he drew a spoon. It was of silver and had on it a crest. Jim never ate with this, but, like the other convicts, ate with his fingers out of a common dish.

But this spoon had been found upon him when he was brought in, and he kept it as a luck-bringer. He

knew nothing now of its history, whatever he might once have known concerning it. He had been subjected to a good deal of ridicule about the luck-bringing capacity of this spoon, but he clung to it, believing that some day it would bring him some kind of luck—he did not know what. It was for this they called him, in irony, "Lucky Jim."

The whipping-boss met him where they had parted, and Jim followed him to the shaft.

As the cage dashed into the sudden light at the top, the convict gave a cry and put his hands over his eyes. He kept them there, for this first burst of the marvelous light of day had blinded him.

His conductor led him to the door, and flinging his arm outward at the world beyond, as if he might possess it all, said:

"There—yo' free. That is the way to the station. Three miles. Yo' take the train there for the city. I expect yo' 'll find yo' folks there. Now git along."

He pushed the negro into the road and closed the door. Jim was quite inert. He had neither heard nor heeded what was said. He was taking his first look, through his nearly blind eyes, at a world he had utterly forgotten.

II

MASTER GOD

THERE was a patch of resinous wood just beyond, the shade and color of which were grateful to his eyes.

The sun and the brazen heavens were very cruel to them. Presently he could see that the fields also were green, and, stooping down, he found that there were flowers under his feet. He moved so that he would not crush them, then softly caressed them. He dimly renewed a vast love he had once had for flowers and birds. In the mine no one had spoken or thought of flowers.

During the rest of the day he wandered furtively from one thing to another, touching those he could not see well, but never getting very far away from the shaft-house, careful always of the flowers. When night fell he shuddered at the uninclosed vastness above and about him. He tried to get into the shelter of the shaft-house, but this was denied him. The patch of resinous wood seemed the next best place, and there he lay upon his back and breathlessly watched the forgotten stars come out. And presently he slept—then suddenly woke to find the moon peering upon him under the trees.

He had forgotten about the moon, too, and the superstition of the mine made her a demon. He leaped up. The planet appeared to lunge toward him. He tried to move, but his heart was battling madly against his ribs, and he slowly subsided, fighting, to the ground. Presently he could raise his head a little, and, taking his arm from before his eyes, he looked out. His enemy was still watchfully there.

Suddenly he thought this must be the God of whom some one who had come to the mine years ago had tried to teach them. For the missionary's God had

been a God of terror. He rose to his knees and stretched out his arms piteously. It was all he had strength to do.

"Oh, Marster Gord, lem me go! I ain' done not'in'. I ain' kill no one—'deed, Marster Gord, I ain'. Dey put me in fo' it, but, 'deed, Marster Gord, I ain' done it, an' I don' know who did. Why, Marster Gord, I was jis a chil' den—jis a chil', Marster Gord! Don' you 'member?"

But his prayers availed him nothing. The moon, as she set, more and more redly, appeared to press malevolently upon him. He began to back cautiously away through the wood. Then, as his heart stopped rioting, he turned and ran madly, looking back over his shoulder. His enemy followed him. He ran on, more and more feebly, until, with a plunge downward, the moon disappeared. He stopped then.

Gradually he understood that there was nothing more to be afraid of. The stars seemed more friendly, and, at all events, they were very far away. But he would not sleep again, though his eyes closed now and then, and he could scarce drag his feet.

So he kept on along the damp, earthy-smelling road, with more comfort as it grew darker. He liked the darkness best, for he had always rested—slept—in the mine when they put the lamps out. And he was not so blind at night. The night had been his day down there. Finally he took his arm away from his eyes, and walked on right merrily.

III

THE SINISTER SUN

BUT again, suddenly, as he crossed the sharp brow of a hill, a something more sinister than the moon barred his way. And his heart leaped up again and choked him so that he could not run. Besides, a wagon coming the other way blocked the narrow road. Jim squeezed himself against the bank at the side to let the wagon go by.

"What's the matter?" asked the wagoner.

"That," said Jim, pointing fearfully at the rising sun.

"Oh!" said the man, with a curious look at him, and then a grin. "Where yo' go'n' to?"

"The city," repeated Jim, remembering the whipping-boss's words.

"Git in," invited the teamster.

Jim did, after some hesitation. He was not much acquainted with wheeled vehicles, and he did not quite trust this one. But it was a choice of dangers, and he thought, primitively, that the teamster would not be likely to go into danger.

Then, as the marvel of daybreak developed, they traveled over and among billows of awesome mist. About him, as far as he could see, was a white, mysterious, shut-in cloudland. Above were a few dim stars. Had they left the earth? Was the teamster, after all, an evil spirit? If he should leave the wagon would he fall down—down to earth? And what then?

Terror possessed him again. He looked back. There was a patch of earth discernible in the rear. To his dim eyes it was very far away. But it was better to try to reach this than to go on further into the clouds. He leaped out, and lay shocked and stunned upon the ground. The man laughed and drove on, shaking his head puzzledly. He looked back presently and said: "Crazy, I expect."

But Jim! Was he wrong about the clouds? As he lay there he seemed to be the center of some vastness with illimitable white vapors stretching away everywhere. Was he above the sky? But at last the mists uplifted and rolled away like phalanges of belated ghosts, and the wet earth crept out as from some guilty hiding. To Jim it was quite like the morning of creation—a new heavens and a new earth—until he saw the wagon winding about below him.

He remembered that the man had said he was going to the city, and he followed him. That was where the boss had told him to go. But very slowly; for he was conscious of a pain at his heart now which cut his breath into gasps. But thus presently in crossing another hill, he came upon the city. He threw his arm up to his eyes in fresh dismay. The sun was plating its roofs and spires with glittering gold. Was this the city of which the missionary had spoken? Had it gates of pearl?

Then this uplifting and scattering of the night, as if it were slipping out of his fingers without his leave. Who lit up the day? And why did it come creeping, instead of in one flash, as in the mine? He was not

glad for the day. It made his eyes hurt and his blindness come again.

IV

THE CITY OF THE NIGHT

HE hid until night fell and he could see the city glow upon the clouds. Then he went down into it.

All night he slunk in and out of the alleys, watching for some one in the careless crowd who might be responsible for it all. He looked for some one god-like and in flaming apparel—one whom he should know at once. Very tall, perhaps, and with the face of a deity. But there appeared to be no one—no more than for the rising and setting of the sun. He lingered in the darkness of his alley until the busy street grew quiet, then quieter, and when there was not a soul in it he came forth. All the night he had the city to himself, and, presently, walked it with an air of possession—quite as if it had been given over to him by intention.

Yes, he liked the night best. And so as the day again came forth and took the city he retreated from it and found a lair under the broken arch of a bridge.

But night by night he would sally forth and possess the city.

And one night he saw a whitewashed cabin wedged in between two tall buildings, and stopped. All night he stood opposite the cabin on the other side of the street. Then he began to remember.

“Useter be er vine—”

He could n't see whether there was a vine now or not at that distance, so he crossed over. The vine was there, clambering over a tumble-down porch.

"Useter be er bu'd-nes' in de vine," mused Jim, as he approached and put his hand into the foliage.

With a shrill note a bird flew out.

"Yo' fool niggah, whad yo' doin'?" said a sharp old voice behind Jim. "Lem my Jim's bu'd alone or I 'll—"

Jim flew round and jerked off his decrepit hat. It was an old negro woman with a pail and scrubbing-brush. For a moment the two eyed each other, Jim shifting his hat diffidently from one hand to the other. The old woman prepared to scrub.

"Go 'long, niggah; I 's got wo'k ter do—I ain' go'n' fool no time wid yo'. Go 'long, now—an' don' yo' fool no mo' with my Jim's bu'd or yo 'll git in trouble wid 'is mudder."

Jim did not move. Presently—

"Don' yo' know me, mammy?"

The negress looked up. Then she laughed.

"Don' I know you? Well, Gord er-mighty! Yo' 'spect *me* ter know you? Wha' yo' come fum? Gord er-mighty! Don' I know you? Sich er spicimen as you!" She laughed again.

Jim began to retreat.

"Well, who is yo', anyhow? Ain' yo' got no tongue?"

"I 's Jim," said the convict.

"Which Jim?"

"Yo' Jim."

The old woman looked at him an amazed instant,

and then clasped her knees and rolled over in an ecstasy of mirth.

"Sich er spicimen as you! Mebbe yo' my Jim's gran'daddy. I 's ol' myse'f; but you! Gord er-mighty! I 'spect yo' mos' er thousan' y'ars ol'—ain yo', now? Sich er spicimen ter call itse'f my Jim!"

She laughed again and turned to her work.

Jim had never thought of this. He put his hands up to his scant white hair and turned away.

"Yassum—yassum," he said humbly.

He was so forlorn that the old woman pitied him.

"Look-a yere, ol' man; who yo' b'long to? Ain' yo' got no folks?"

"No 'm," said Jim; "no 'm."

"Well, yo' look right po'ly, ol' man. Yo' oughter have some one tek keer yo'."

Jim began to shuffle blindly away.

She was moved by his note of abjectness.

"Look-a yere," she called after him; "yo' gwine ter come right in dish yere house an' git some breakfus', anyhow. Yo' ain' had nary breakfus' fo' er week, by de looks ob yer. Dis is my Jim's day, an' I don' sen' no one away hongry on my Jim's day. I 'spec's him home ter-day, ol' man—my Jim. 'Spect him ary minute."

V

SUCH A SPECIMEN!

SHE pushed him into the house, into a chair, where he had an ambrosial breakfast, though it was only

ham and eggs; then she pushed him to a bench and bade him sleep, talking all the while about Jim. He could not sleep for this.

"He gwine ter come now—yassir! In 'bout a hour! Aha, ha, ha! How come yo' think yo' my Jim? Out yo' head, I 'spect. An' yo' mos' blin', po' ol' man! When Jim come—yo' like fo' see my Jim?"

She brought a photograph of himself and held it close before his eyes.

"Gre't boy, dat! Jis twenty-nine ter-day. Always 'spect 'im on 'is birthday. 'Cause I always as' de gub'ner to poddon him so 's 'e kin git yere on 'is birthday. So I 's always ready fo' 'im on 'is—I 's axt ebery gub'ner we 's had sence 'e went in to poddon 'im on 'is birthday, an' dey all dunno 'bout it tell dish yere las' one. But he—he ax' me er lot er questions, an' I guv 'im mo' answers dan he ax' fo'. Den he say he 's er-gwine ter sen' fo' Jim's ricord an' lem me know. Well, he ain' lem me know. But he 's er-gwine ter poddon him dis time sho 's yo' bo'n—fo' Jim's ricord 's er-gwine ter save him. He ain done no h'am—my Jim ain', an' de gub'ner gwine fin' dat out soon 's he sen' fo' Jim's ricord."

Her guest asked a timorous question. He turned his head away as he did it:

"Yo' think yo' gwine know him when yo' see—him?"

The old woman turned upon him in specious wrath.

"Yo' axin' Jim's mudder ef she 's er-gwine know her own Jim! Her li'l' baby! Why, yo' ol' spicimen, I got a min' to put yo' out dish yere house! Jim's mudder not know 'er Jim!"

The convict cowered.

"Twenty y'ars—" he ventured.

"Gord er-mighty! I don' keer ef it 's er thousan'! I's er-gwine know him de minute my eyeslight on him."

"Yassum," said the humble guest, with finality.

"I pray de good Gord tell he 's jis 'bleeged ter sen' him back ter me."

"De *good* Gord?" questioned the convict.

"Yas. Don' yo' know him? Yo' mus' be er wicked ol' spicimen ef yo' don' know de good Gord."

Jim shook his head.

"*Don'* yo' know him?"

"No," said Jim; "not de *good* Gord."

"Well, he knows you—he does," said his mother.

Again Jim shook his head.

There was a noise at the door, and the old woman ran outward. When she returned Jim was guiltily replacing the warped little mirror.

"Thought I tol' yo' a lie erbout yo' ol' mug, hah? Yo' jis wait tell yo' see my Jim! He 's er *man*, he is—jis twenty-nine ter-day. No sich er spicimen—"

Jim was slowly retreating. She hastened him a little.

"Yas, git erlong, ol' man. I got ter git er dinner fo' my Jim—git erlong. He ain' come yit, but he 's er-gwine ter come sho 's yo' lib. I got ter feelin' in my breas' ter-day dat he is. Git erlong."

VI

THE PAIN AT JIM'S HEART

SHE pushed him out and closed the door.

And Jim went quite cheerfully. For it had dawned

upon his slow intellect that it was better thus—that she should wait—die waiting—than that she should learn that such a specimen as he was her Jim.

Nevertheless his feet had been very light, and his heart had stopped thumping as he had crossed the street and put his hand into the nest that had always been there. And now his feet dragged heavily, and that constricting pain was again at his heart.

When he had reached an uninhabited space he knew well, he looked furtively about, and, finding no one in sight, sat down upon a stone where he was wont to rest. He sought and found the paper with the gilt seal, and looked at it long and painfully, turning it curiously this way and that (he could not read). Then he began to tear it, but stopped in awe, and finally placed it beneath the stone.

Later in the day they found him in his lair, unconscious, with his hand gripping the place of his heart, and terror on his face. They took him to the hospital.

Toward evening an old negro woman came stormily up the stairs—taking one step at a time and talking to Jim as she came.

“Jim! Yo’ fool niggah, I ’s foun’ yo’ at las’, has I? Jim!” It was the shrill treble which dams up tears. “Fo’ why yo’ put yo’ ol’ mudder to all dat trouble? Jim! Yo’ Jim!” Terror broke through here. “Fo’ why yo’ don’ answer yo’ ol’ mudder? Fo’ why yo’ di’n’ say yo’ my Jim? I foun’ de spoon yo’ dropped—an’ den I gits de gub’ner’s letter—de spoon I got ob little missy. Yo’ Jim! Fo’ why yo’ don’ answer me?” Her voice broke with agony now.

“Jim—Jim—Jim! Speak ter me. Jis ter year

yo' voice. I don' keer, Jim, ef yo' is ol'! I don' keer ef yo' is wrinkle—an' gray—an' blin'! I don' keer fo' not'in' 'cep' jis 'at yo' 's—my Jim." She was within a few steps of the bed on which he lay. Her voice softened wondrously as she came—now gently, on her toes. "Jim, I 's er-gwine tek yo' home and nuss you. Oh, I kin do it, Jim. Yo' knows dat, ef yo' 'members anything. An' we 's gwine to lib tergedder all de res'— Oh, Jim, I wan' ter lub yo' oncet mo'! Jim, I 's waited fo' yo'—waited—seems lak my ol' a'ms is hongry an' thirsty fo' yo'. Jim, yere I is. Jim—"

They had carelessly told her he was up there. As she reached the top of the stairs she stood directly over Jim's cot.

He was dead.



THE OUTRAGEOUS MISS
DAWN-DREAM



THE OUTRAGEOUS MISS DAWN-DREAM

I

ABOUT AN INCH PAST SEVEN IN THE MORNING

MISS DAWN-DREAM was embroidering—I do not know what, exactly. It would belong to a trousseau presently—when completed. Perhaps it was a furisodé. The shoji were closed—for this was secret work, and close at hand were other shoji.

Just outside was a mite of a cherry-tree, skilfully gnarled to look like much more of a cherry-tree. It had a thousand huge pink blossoms thick-studded on its small branches. But a bird had found standing-room among them. Now he trilled a note which made Miss Dawn-Dream drop the furisodé—if that is what it was—and fly to the shoji. These she opened and bowed to the bird.

“O august first robin,” she whispered, “do you announce the spring?”

The bird looked curiously into her apartment.

Dawn-Dream thought of the furisodé.

“You must *not* look at—*that*, robin!”

She smiled up at him.

"What can an excellent little bird know about—wedding-things?"

But the bird looked very wise.

"Perhaps it is my honorable wedding you announce?" whispered the girl, laughing.

The bird nodded gravely.

"But—I have something to do—*before!*"

The robin pecked at a blossom. He liked Dawn-Dream. Everybody did.

"You will wait?"

The bird satisfied her that he would.

In Japan, you know, birds are people of more consequence than they are here.

It was not five feet across the tiny garden to the other shoji I have mentioned. One of these had also opened. A face had appeared. Then a hand. In this was a brush. The artist also bowed to the bird. Then he saw Miss Dawn-Dream, and began to close his shoji and to pretend that he had not. For he had looked into his fiancée's holy of holies—and this was excessively improper! Men had been killed for this.

But—Dawn-Dream smiled at him! He halted—questioned—there was no one to see—opened his shoji a little! Dawn-Dream smiled more. Further, the shoji! Until he stood brazenly revealed! Miss Dawn-Dream made a little obeisance. The bird looked unbelievably from one to the other.

"It was spring," said the young artist, answering her question to the bird.

"Yes."

Now she should have bowed deeply—deeply, and

closed her shoji, slowly. This the bird expected. But it did not happen.

"As long as I stand this way he cannot see within—the furisodé," was her curious excuse to the bird—in whispers—so that he, and not the artist, might hear.

But she did not think how pretty she might be—framed by the shoji, like a kakemono freshly unrolled for the young artist—until she looked at him again. Then she asked of the things in his face:

"What, excellent Suishu?"

"I observe a celestial goddess!"

Now certainly she would go!

Instead she spoke back to the daring artist:

"They bloom to-day."

"Here?" *He* meant goddesses.

Dawn-Dream looked toward the tree.

"Here."

"Here the sun shines augustly always!"

Dawn-Dream smiled ecstasically.

"Always!"

But the girl meant more than even he did. The bird chirruped her a small note of warning. The artist must have understood a little. He said:

"Because here is the goddess!"

The girl chanted:

"In the spring
It often happens
Men to maidens
Speak dear things."

He begged her pardon. Was it possible? He put his hand to his ear.

She answered with another :

“ In the spring
A maiden wonders
Why she has not
Nest and wings.”

They laughed together—very timorously. I hope, as you see how the ice is breaking, you do not forget how daring all this was—in Japan. The bird did not. He was receiving a series of debilitating shocks. Why could not people without feathers behave like people with feathers—precisely as they ought? I hope you do not forget how dull and proper the artist was—yet how fascinated; how subtle Miss Dawn-Dream was—yet how determined.

“To-day the cherries should bloom everywhere,” said the artist (whose name, it is time you should know, was Mr. Rock-Crystal); “it is the day of the garden-party of the Celestial Empress.”

At the name of the Empress both kotowed, and the bird, for the first time, approved their communion.

“They *should* bloom—yes!” said Dawn-Dream.

They bowed to each other and laughed.

Now this was a cunning saying. The cherries *do* always bloom on the day of the garden-party of the Empress. *But* if the cherries are not ready to bloom on that day the party waits! You do not go, notwithstanding your command, until a stentorian messenger bangs at your shoji and informs you that the imperial blossoms condescend to receive the imperial court!

“And that day,” sighed the girl, “everybody does daring things!”

The dull artist wondered a moment.

He had apprehended her so instantly that perhaps she would think I am mistaken about his dullness. But wait!

"Do you, divine one, wish to do a daring thing?"

"Yes!"

She flung it at him in a way to appal the bird.

But just then came a mighty rattling of the artist's other shoji. And Miss Dawn-Dream could not help hearing—even if she had wished to help it, which I do not believe—Mr. Rock-Crystal being bidden to the Imperial Gardens!

Now, again, Dawn-Dream should have closed her shoji and pretended that she had heard nothing and that Rock-Crystal would not return to the shoji he had left open to indicate that he would. But all Dawn-Dream did was to rush back and put the furisodé out of sight, and then return and stand just as if she had not moved—putting out her tongue a little at the scandalized bird.

Rock-Crystal looked guilty.

"You!" reproached the girl, "who do not *wish* to do anything honorably outrageous! *You!*"

The artist displayed his card—nearly a yard square—by way of saying that it was a *command!*

"I am honorably obliged to go."

"I forgot that you were a samurai—with swords—and a queue—and I only a—"

"Goddess!" smiled her lover.

"No!"

Miss Dawn-Dream stamped her foot.

He repeated his sacrilege.

"A goddess! And I have not power to make you—"

"What?" asked the artist, breathlessly.

"Take me!"

After the shock the artist said:

"You shall go!"

"I?"

"If I die for it!"

"Oh!"

Dawn-Dream held up a finger and looked fearsomely backward lest her aunt—or Kanzashi-San—might have heard. Or was it only a cunning pretense of danger? Peril makes brave men braver. And the young samurai was scowling as all his ancestors did in their armed portraits.

"You *dare* not!" whispered Miss Dawn-Dream, hugely, across the tiny garden.

"I dare!"

Back in a more huge whisper:

"You—*dare*?"

One should have seen Dawn-Dream's eyes then!

"Ssh!"

The brave young artist crossed the tiny garden as if each pebble were an explosive.

The robin stared and followed him with one outraged eye while he tried to keep the girl in the other.

"Ssh!—ssh!—ssh!—ssh!" at each step, like a stage villain.

Dawn-Dream closed her shoji so that only her nose and one eye could be seen.

"Listen!" Rock-Crystal had to come very close. It was treason he was compassing. The furisodé was out of sight—if that is what it was. But the lovely

flower-perfume of the room—and of the girl too!—breathed out through the shoji upon him. “I will change *my* name to yours. See—” He had brought a brush dipped in red. He showed her—on the palm of his hand—how it could be done by the transposition of a Chinese character. The young artist was very wise—in Chinese.

“And you?” asked the disappointed girl.

“Me? I shall paint.”

“The command is for—one?”

“Always for but one.”

“Pardon me; I do not wish to go like an excellent thief in a graveyard,” said the girl, with sudden haughtiness.

The artist felt hurt.

“I am a goddess!”

Now the girl laughed.

“I do not understand.”

This was true. The young artist was very wise in Chinese, but very dull about women—precisely as I have told you. He began to retreat—backward—dropping the color from his brush like splashes of blood. Then he had a thought.

“You did not mean—*you—me?*”

The girl nodded saucily.

It was unbelievable. But he was brave—when once he understood—about women.

“I will take you to-night! To Mukojima!”

Dawn-Dream was interested.

“Nothing is so augustly divine as the cherries by the light of the vast moon. It is for goddesses!”

“And my aunt and Kanzashi-San also?”

"Certainly! Your aunt and Miss Hair-Pin!"

"They are not—goddesses?"

"No."

Such a dull artist—about women—when he did not understand!

"Pardon me, very excellent Suishu; I do not, either, care for the cherries by moonlight—with Miss Aunt and Miss Hair-Pin."

Now—did he understand?

No! Such a very dull artist!

"Good morning, excellent Suishu."

She began to close the shoji.

The bird chirped his satisfaction.

"I am thinking!"

Suishu put up his hand to prevent the closing of the screen. It continued on its way remorselessly.

"You would not go without them? *You—me?*"

Through the last half-inch spoke Mr. Rock-Crystal.

The shoji opened a little. Miss Dawn-Dream's head nodded.

"Shaka! No one has ever—"

The shoji closed. Through the last inch or two again spoke Suishu:

"Yes!"

His one word made the shoji open to its full. Oki-Yume dropped to her knees so that their faces were quite on the same plane. She looked backward, then beckoned him a little closer. She had to whisper very softly. The bird peered with shocked eyes under the branch at them.

"Goo-Goo-San—"

The artist tried to stop her. The American girl and

the fearful things she had done,—and left undone,—according to his code!

“I will *not* stop! There! You have given me leave—now! I shall speak—*anything*! There is no one to *hear*. There will be no one to *see*—at Mukojima! You are shocked? I shall make eyes at you then! There! She taught me! I can make eyes!”

She showed him that she could.

“She said that she would *not* be excellently married until she had done something outrageous. She wanted to put her feet on a table and smoke. I do not.”

“What is the outrageous thing you wish to do?” asked the frightened Suishu.

“*Love!*”

“What is that?”

“This and this and this!”

Certain wild movements with her arms, and, at the last, something queer with her lips.

The artist only stared—vastly fascinated, but dull as ever.

“Oh, no one knows how sweet it is till he tries! I will show you—at Mukojima. Just as she showed me. It is terrible—but dear. She is not to be married for many years—though she is older than I am. I promised her that I would do the outrageous thing before. So that we would have something to be proud of when we were old—to confess, conceal, and smile over, to tell in whispers—to women. She has many days for outrageous things—I only a few. Suishu?”

The young samurai shook his head savagely—as if that were the end of it. But it was not. He was certainly not wise—concerning women.

"Then I will not marry you! She says no husband in America loves his wife like that after he is married. And I *will* be loved like that—if for only one day—before I am married! Yes! Else I will not marry you—ever! When they come to take me to your house they shall find me in my furisode—yes—and the flowers in my hair—yes—and the veil upon me—yes—the paint on my cheeks and lips—the embroidered obi—*dead!*"

The expectant bridegroom had never heard anything so desperate. He was sufficiently shocked for her to go on—very witchingly now:

"If you *would* change the name in red—yes—I could go to—*Mukojima!* And you might—be there! Or—on the way! There is no law against that! You alone—I. Only the coolies. Well? We might meet!"

And all the dull artist said was:

"Also, we might—not!"

How many things he did not know about women!

"We might not," laughed the girl.

She would take care of that.

"Your august aunt will think you at the Imperial Gardens!"

"Yes."

"But you will not be there!"

"No."

"It will be an honorable untruth!"

"Yes."

She said it with the utmost joy.

"It shall not occur!"

"You wish me to be married without having done one honorable outrageous thing? You wish me to

break my word to Goo-Goo-San? You wish me to have been as I have always been—quite proper? With nothing to conceal—confess? Nothing to be proud of in secret? Nothing to tell in whispers when I have blackened my teeth—to women? Very well! I have always been quite proper. So I shall die—*unwed*. Good morning!”

She closed the shoji in the artist's face with shocking suddenness.

The bird nodded approvingly.

The shoji opened a little.

“What did you say?” asked Dawn-Dream.

The bird looked vexed.

Almost the dull artist had blurted out: “Nothing!”

But some of the eight hundred thousand demons helped him. He looked at his queer little clock, which ran forward twelve hours, then backward twelve, and said:

“It is now, divine one, about an inch past seven in the august morning. At eight a messenger will summon you to the Imperial Gardens—alone. As for me”—he seemed to face some calamity coolly—“at one in the afternoon I shall be on my way to Mukojima by the road which follows the river—rather that than have you honorably dead!”

“Yes,” beamed the girl. “Rather outrageous and alive—a little outrageous—than proper—very proper—and honorably dead!”

But the artist hesitated.

“Say so!” commanded Dawn-Dream.

Rock-Crystal obeyed.

The girl bowed solemnly and closed her shoji. He bowed more solemnly and closed his.

The bird looked for ten minutes from one to the other, then gave way to despair.

As Miss Dawn-Dream made her toilet she said to her mirror:

"He *did*! I *made* him! Always I shall make him. Thank you, Goo-Goo-San!"

But was it Goo-Goo-San she had to thank?

Later, as she and Miss Hair-Pin, her maid, leaned upon the porcelain screen and talked gravely, so that one could hardly have fancied her the Dawn-Dream of a few minutes before, some one pounded upon the shoji and summoned her to the Imperial Gardens.

"You!" said the maid.

"Me?" pouted her mistress.

"And you must go alone!"

"Alone!" answered Dawn-Dream, heroically.

II

AT ONE IN THE AFTERNOON

So at one in the afternoon a 'rikisha containing a girl was racing up the river road, trying desperately to keep ahead of another containing a man—and not succeeding.

Did the four girls among the irises—themselves like

irises—understand? Two of them were dull and only wondered. But the two with arms entwined—under a pink umbrella—they smiled!

And as they entered the cherry grove—the two racing 'rikishas—a little procession of maidens was leaving it—each all alone! Did *they* know that Dawn-Dream was—*not* alone? And that she was doing something outrageous?

One of them looked back—saw—nodded. Such is joy! For—I do not know how they managed it—they arrived side by side—the racing 'rikishas. And the girl from the one 'rikisha leaped—flying, laughing, chattering—into the unwilling arms of the man from the other—to the vast scandal of the multitude, who turned their backs and laughed. Such is joy!

And there was no aunt to see, now, nor any Miss Hair-Pin to chaperon, and the coolies were to wait at the entrance! Think of it! But—they were to be married in a month—and the furisodé was nearly ready. Still, I am glad the bird was not there.

To his unwilling arms Dawn-Dream said:

“But you will like it better and better.”

Well—he did. The next of her allures was taken more easily.

“Do not be discouraged,” laughed beautiful Dawn-Dream.

He laughed with her. Think of it! And said that he would not be! His vanquishment was complete in an hour!

“Do you like the American way?”

“Yes—with Japanese constraint.”

Pray fancy the constraint!

The first poem they found hanging from the branches was for him—so she swore. You know *how* she swore—by the myriad gods—by the peace of Shaka!

“ My love has hair
Which shades his brow
Like leaves—
Like leaves at midnight—
When the moon is out
And very fair.”

The next—as it should be—was for her. So *he* swore—you know how.

“ I 've a maiden
With a laugh—
Low—sweet—sure!
Oh!

“ I 've a maiden
With a hand—
Like this—these—
Oh! ”

The illustration of “this,” “these,” was one cherry blossom—then two.

“ *You!* ” laughed the artist, fondly.

“ Then there is another? ”

“ Yes! This—these! ”

Not the dull artist now! *He* put his lips to each one!

Dawn-Dream stood off and stared.

“ You are outrageous yourself! ”

He laughed. She looked at the hands he held.

There *are*—two.”

“Two! Yes! A thousand—all the hands of the world—in these!”

The girl held her breath in ecstasy.

“Oh, oh, oh! *You!* A great samurai! You! Head of a clan! You, too, will have something to conceal! To tell with whispering! To be proud of among men! Never among women! Promise!”

He laughed her his promise.

“Oh, *how* you learn! At first it was so hard!”

She looked witchingly up at him. He looked longingly down at her. Some clairvoyant temptation came to both of them.

“ In the spring
It often happens
Men to maidens
Say dear things—”

Both looked whimsically about. They were not alone. Both sighed. A woman passed. He reached out for the scroll at his hand.

“ Cherry-blooms are very pink—
Yet not so pink as you are.
April-wind is melody—
Yet never such as you are.”

Yumé-San replied with another:

“ My lover is a huge, huge bear!
He has a coat of wire—
Claws!
He embraces me—as a bear!

I cry out!
 He has a woman's heart—
 He lets me go!
 Ugh!
 My lover is a huge, huge bear!"

They laughed together.

"*You!*" said Miss Dawn-Dream.

"A bear?"

"So huge?"

"So huge."

"The fur of wire?"

"Of wire."

"Claws?"

"Yes."

"Embracing—"

At that moment they were quite alone. It was a pink-fleeced grotto. She came upon him—her head drooping. He retreated—perhaps an inch—fighting for some decorum within.

"In a month we will be married!"

She pouted it in whispers.

The thing within was vanquished.

His arms opened—closed. A policeman poked his head into the grotto.

"Pardon me," he said hastily.

"You did not cry out," he whispered joyously, "so—"

"You are a bear!"

"You did *not* cry out, and so—you do not cry out—*now!*"

"You have *not*—a woman's heart!"

She tore herself from him and ran away—laughing back.

It was quite late in the afternoon—no longer in the pink grotto—when Miss Dawn-Dream said:

"Now I know that you adore me."

"Of course!"

But that was too easy.

"Ask me *how* I know, please."

He did so.

"You gave up the garden-party—for this."

"Oh!"

"For *me*!"

As if that would make him regret it!

"I got more than I gave!"

"No one ever before gave up the garden-party for—a woman!"

"No?"

"For anything but death!"

"Oh!"

"And you are not afraid?"

"Of what?"

"The American—things?"

He answered her in a fashion better than words since time immemorial.

"Nor to marry me—since I have been outrageous?"

The same sort of answer. Then he asked:

"Are you ready?"

"To go? No. I shall stay here forever!"

"To marry me."

She knew perfectly that he had meant that.

"Are you?"

"My presents rust."

"In a month."

"And not—to-morrow?"

Then she thought longingly of the unfinished furi-sodé—if that is what it was—but for which she might have answered yes, but for which she had to repeat:

"In a month."

And then they went home—Miss Dawn-Dream following, so that the coolies, who saw nothing in the morning, might see nothing now. But these coolies could not understand why they had to follow the slow coach before them when they had been urged to speed while it was behind them. For they were wise about jin-rikishas, but not women.

The sun was setting. On the right a man plowed in his rice-field. The mud had splashed the belly of his ox a pale green. He turned and grinned. The 'rikisha in front stopped. The other one stopped.

"Good night," called the man in front to the happy plowman.

"Good night," returned the man—with his smiling eyes on the girl.

"It is joy," said she, smiling to the farmer.

Further, a man and his wife were going home from the field. He had on a rain-coat. She carried a teapot. Again the 'rikisha in front stopped. Again the one behind.

"It does not rain?"

"It may."

The wife with the teapot smiled upon her muddy lord. It was a brilliant reply.

They exchanged good nights with smiles. But the girl in the rear, who was silent, got more.

"It is joy!" she said again. "Oh, the world is full of joy!"

The 'rikisha in front turned into the Kiobashi-Dori. The girl in the one behind risked the dislocation of her neck watching it out of sight. Then, when there was no one to outrun, she made her coolies run!

Her Miss Aunt commended the glow in Miss Dawn-Dream's cheeks.

"Was it not exquisite?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Always it is."

"Yes."

"If one did not have to go alone!"

Then Miss Dawn-Dream woke up and laughed.

"What do you augustly dream of?"

"A month."

Such a reply! Her aunt stared.

"It is such a very long time—a month."

"Yes."

"A day is shorter."

Again her aunt stared.

"The garden-party—?"

Again Miss Dawn-Dream remembered and laughed.

"It was exquisite—it *was*!"

Well—it was.



THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE LITTLE
STREET WHERE THE SUN
NEVER CAME



THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE LITTLE STREET WHERE THE SUN NEVER CAME

DEARLY BELOVED: My text this morning is the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

In the illumination of this theme I shall follow the custom you have so considerately permitted me, of choosing my own best means. I choose this morning to tell you a story. It is not the first time I have done this, and I offer no apology for doing it now. It is the way of the Scriptures, and of the Great Teacher.

But this is not a parable: it is an experience. I could not invent a parable so well calculated to teach the baleful consequences of evil—even though repented of, even though expiated. My story is of a convict in the county prison. He has long been preaching to you through me. He is a better preacher than I, and has saved more souls. Yet his story is not a pleasant one.

Did you ever stop to think that there are some things which even God cannot change?

He is only a number to the keepers of the prison. His age is twenty-three. His hair is gray, and he stoops; yet his face is, to me, very beautiful. It is

pale with the pallor of the prison, but his eyes are very blue in the midst of it, and his mouth is fine and boyish. There are little curls of beard on his face which remind me sometimes of the portraits of John the Baptist.

A few years ago he was a loafer on Alaska Street, a singer of songs in its saloons. Some of you don't even know where that is. He was a thief. His father was a thief before him. And both were proud of it. It was their heredity, as yours is something else. Remember, it was Alaska Street. At ten he had a title—the "baby cracksman." At fourteen he was in the rogues' gallery at City Hall—another and greater distinction. And yet he had a mother. And she was gentle—for Alaska Street. Some one had converted her, and she had tried to convert her husband and son. They laughed at her—in good enough nature—and remained away from her a little more.

One day they brought Con—that is his name—up from the prison to see his mother die. It was only a few minutes they let him remain, but in that little time two things happened: Con discovered that he loved his mother, and I learned to know him. I had heard of him, and was surprised at the laughing, boyish innocence of his face.

"Con," said his mother, "I think I'm—going to heaven."

"Yes," said Con, who had no doubt of it.

"And I'll—I'll—" She wanted to fix something in his mind that would lead him to goodness.

"And I'll wait for you at the gate."

It was the refrain of a Sunday-school song.

"Did—did—don't," gasped Con, in terror. He had never dreamed of going to heaven. "It's no use."

"Promise that you will meet me—at the gate!" pleaded the mother.

Con's eyes appealed to me.

"Promise!" I said.

"You would never break your promise—to me," said the mother, putting her hand on Con's.

"I promise," said Con.

Con pointed out to me that his mother's face after death was joyous.

"Because of your promise," I said.

"Do you think so?" asked Con, with awe and terror together in his own face.

"Yes," I said.

"Then—then I'll *have* to do it," the boy answered. For a moment his mind flew back and forth over his life, trying to understand what it meant. Then he said with a gasp:

"Do you think I kin?"

"I think you can," I said. "I will help you."

"Give me your hand on it."

It is not an easy road from the slums to the church—from the company of thieves to that of Christians. None of us has ever traveled one so difficult. And then, Con had the misfortune to come first at those terrible passages of denunciation in which the Scriptures abound. One night I found him prone upon the floor, trying to read by the light of a small candle.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"Trying to find the way, sir," Con answered.

"And how do you succeed?"

"Can't find it; there is none—for me. Listen: 'The wicked shall be turned into hell.'"

I took the book. "'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow,'" I read.

"Why, where did you find *that*?" asked Con.

I showed him.

"Any more like it?"

I showed him other passages of that kind.

But then I thought it best to let him search the Scriptures himself. And he did. When I came again he had found the story of the atonement.

"I understand now," Con said, "and it 's all right."

I finally secured him employment in the stables of the City Traction Company. It was the meanest and lowest thing they had to do. But Con was glad to get it. He said he liked the work in the stable. And when I asked him why, he answered:

"*Somebody* was born in a stable."

By slow stages he worked upward until he became a conductor. Often I rode with him. Often I watched him. He was handling the money which had tempted him down there in Alaska Street. One day I noticed that he rung up certain fares which did not appear to have been paid. I took him to the back platform and demanded an explanation.

"It takes a long time to git a character," sighed Con.

I pressed my inquiry.

"How many people in the car?" he asked.

"Twenty-two," I counted.

"How many on the dial?"

"Twenty-two," I said again.

He pulled the receipts out of his pocket. "Should be a dollar ten," he said as we counted.

"A dollar fifteen," he laughed; "a mistake in favor of the company."

Still I was not satisfied.

"Then, Con," I said, "it looks as if some one paid and got off and you did not ring up."

Then Con became serious.

"I *am* a little careless about my own money sometimes, but not about that of the company. Sometimes"—he hesitated, but I made him go on—"sometimes, when some poor washerwoman gits on, I pay her fare. My mother was a washerwoman. And the little poor kids—sometimes I pay the fares for the little poor kids—the kind that look as if they did n't git enough to eat."

But a strange thing happened from this. Con's car came to be patronized by washerwomen and poor children almost exclusively, and well-dressed people avoided it and complained to the company. And the receipts fell to almost nothing. We did not think at the time of the danger of this. Indeed, to Con it was a very joyous fact. The people he liked best and who liked him best were his passengers.

Suddenly Con was transferred from the day to the night line. It was at about the time that I began my service at the Midnight Mission in Spruce Street. I therefore used to ride home with Con several nights a week. On my first night Con stopped at a large printing-house on Market Street and waited. It was his first up trip—a quarter past twelve. I asked him what he was waiting for.

"You 'll see in a minute," he laughed.

Presently a girl came hurrying from the printing-house and into the car.

After this had happened a number of times I asked Con if he knew the girl.

"No," he said; "but I like to be kind to her. They took my washerwomen and kids from me, and I've got to be kind to some one."

"Con," I asked, "have you ever been in love?"

Con laughed and shook his head.

"Would n't know it if I saw it," he said.

However, the waiting continued, and presently Con took courage to say, when she approached:

"Going up?"

Perhaps the girl suspected that it was only a clumsy device for conversation, for at first she would only smile.

But one night she answered him with a soft "Yes." She seemed ashamed to have been betrayed by his useless question at last, but after that she always gave him a "Yes" for his "Going up?"

For a long time that was all. But then, on a cold night, Con got down and helped her on. He remarked as he did so:

"Cold!"

"Yes—it *is*—cold," answered the surprised girl.

On another night Con said: "You walk like you was tired to-night."

"Yes," confessed the girl, with a flush; "I am tired. Don't *you* never git tired?"

"Y—yes," said Con, confused by so much graciousness; "bib—bib—but never on this trip!"

Then he fled to me on the platform.

The girl's eyes followed Con out in some wonder of him; then we could see her pull her thin wrap about her and gently fall asleep. And somehow, as she slept, the hollows in her cheeks disappeared and they became rosy. I was surprised at her wan and pathetic beauty. Con saw as much of this as I did—perhaps more.

"She's handsome," said he.

"She's beautiful," said I.

"But that cough—" said Con. "Do you think she'd mind if I sneaked in and put my overcoat on her?"

"It would keep her warm," I said.

He did it, and came happily back to me.

"Don't catch cold yourself," I admonished. "Go inside."

Con caught my arm as I was about to precede him.

"You'll wake her," he said.

We saw an added glow come into the tired face, and unconsciously she pulled the coat closer.

Con was in ecstasy. He told the motorman to go carefully at the curves and over switches.

As we approached the little street where she lived he stole in and recovered his overcoat. Then he retreated to the platform and called officially the name of the street.

"I—I must 'a' slep'," smiled the girl, as she came forth. "I feel rested—and *warm*."

"Mind the car," whispered Con; "I'm going up the little street with her."

The girl was inclined to be rebellious, but Con drew her arm within his own and carried her off like a conqueror.

One night, when we three were again alone, Con left me, as he mysteriously said, to go inside to 'tend to his lamps. I did not see how they could be brought to greater brightness. But on his way out he sat down for a moment beside the girl, and I understood what "tending to the lamps" meant.

"You 're not very strong," began Con.

"No," confessed the girl.

"You ought n't to work so hard—anyhow, at night."

"I got to," sighed the girl.

"Why you got to?"

The girl looked up in mild surprise. Con was noting the bones at her thin wrists. He repeated his question doggedly.

"Mother 's a cripple," said the girl.

"Don't your father earn nothing?"

Shame flew into the girl's thin face. Her head drooped. She was silent.

"Say—what does your father—"

Con's voice rose angrily, and the girl gasped. He repeated his question.

"I—never—had no father," she said then.

Con's face grew white. I saw his hands grip each other. The girl's head went a little lower. Con rose to his feet.

"Say," he said hoarsely, "I—I like you."

The girl slowly shook her head.

"I *like* you!" repeated Con.

The girl made no motion, and he came to me on the platform.

"Say, you ast me once if I was ever in love; well, I 'm in love now, I expect. Ain't it love when you 'd die for—for her?"

He pointed into the car.

"Yes, Con, that is love," I said; "and I'm glad of it."

That night he took her up the little street again. And she did not object to it.

One night Mary (that was her name) did not appear at a quarter after twelve. It was in the early spring. We waited five minutes. Then I insisted that Con should go on.

"You will be reported for such unusual delay," I said.

He was immovable.

At last I volunteered to go in and see what was the matter. She had not been there that day.

"Will you do me a favor?" Con asked. "Come along to the little house and see whether she's—she's—sick."

I hurt Con by refusing to go that night, but promised to go on the third night following if she did not appear. I kept away from him in the meantime. When I got on his car he was in a state of great excitement. He had not seen the girl.

We went to the little house.

A small, lame woman opened the door to us. She stared a moment with the tired eyes of the watcher, and then said:

"Good evening."

There was something deprecatingly pretty about her.

Con spoke up avidly: "I jist got off duty—ma'am—a little while—I'm on the night line now—and I missed her, ma'am, I missed her—and I'd like to know if she's—if there's anything the matter—I—because I missed her."

"Mary?" asked the little woman, warily.

"Yes—yessum—Mary."

"She is sick."

Con swayed unsteadily upon the door-step. The little watcher began cautiously to close the door.

"Wait, wait—jist a minute," begged Con, holding the door open. "This is Mr. Burton. He's a minister. And I 'm Con. She's told you about us, I expect?"

The little woman said, "No."

"Ain't she told you about—*me*?"

Another negative.

I interposed with an explanation for Con, and the request that he be permitted to see her.

"I am very sorry," said the mother, "but she must not see anybody. That is the doctor's orders."

"But, ma'am, I must see her—*must*!" cried Con. "I kin make her well—I *kin*!"

Con was growing vociferous in his grief. He did not seem likely to gain admittance that way.

"Madam," I said, "I think it will do your daughter good to see Con. I am sure it will do her no harm. Kindly ask her if she will see us. If she will not, we will go away at once."

Con grasped that hope.

"Yes," he whispered; "*ast her—jist ast her!*"

Of course she would see us! I heard her explaining in the next room that she did not think either of us cared. And then while we waited I heard them make her pretty for us. And I fancied the little pink changes in the delicate face I had learned to know. And when presently the mother returned with lightened feet, I prayed that love might enter to her

daughter as he had once entered to her—and that he might not depart so quickly.

Mary held out her wasted hands to Con, and he took them greedily, gasping:

“Mary—oh, Mary—I missed you so!”

And it had been only three days!

With a woman’s intuition she understood it all, and pulled him down and kissed him.

Con was taken by surprise and bolted.

“Why, I thought—once you said you liked me—and then you missed me—and you came here—I thought—”

She thought no more. For Con swooped upon her and kissed her eyes and hair and mouth.

“Con,” confessed the girl, hoarsely, “I *wished* you’d miss me. Wishing makes things happen, you know.”

“I missed you without that,” said Con.

“That makes me glad,” breathed the girl, “but—”

She stopped and compassionately stroked his face.

“When ’ll you be ready to go up with us again?” asked Con.

“Poor Con!” She put her arms about his neck longingly.

Con understood. He staggered chokingly up. The parcel he had carried all the way uncovered.

“Look here!”

He shouted it in the high treble of agony as he thrust them upon her—two dozen costly roses.

The sick girl gave a moan of pleasure as she buried her face in them. “Oh, Con!” was all she could say. And as she plunged her face again and again into them, taking their fragrance with rapturous breaths, that was all she could repeat: “Oh, Con!”

But the choking had passed from Con, and he was a man again.

"Con," said the girl, presently, "I 'd rather have these than anything you could bring me. Mine all died, you know."

Con whimsically pretended to want them back.

"There was something else I wanted to give you. But if you 'd rather have those than—anything—"

"Something else? But what? Why, these must have cost—"

She paused, appalled.

"A month's wages," laughed Con. "But the other thing did n't cost—or at least ain't worth a cent—and you don't want it!"

"What is it, Con?" asked the wondering girl. "Let me have it. Yes, I want it."

"It 's myself."

For a moment the girl only stared. Then she rose on her elbow in the bed.

"But, Con—"

Con half put an arm about her.

"I 'll be spending my money all the time for foolishness if you don't let me use it to take keer of your ma and you."

"But, Con—" said Mary, again, with that fierce light of unbelieving joy in her eyes.

"Oh, I could do it," Con went on misunderstandingly. "We would n't be to say *rich*. But you 'd be comfortable and I 'd be happy—mighty happy."

Mary crept upon his arm.

"Con, *Con*, do you mean that you want to *marry* me?"

"Yes; I'm in love with you. Ain't I in love with her?" he asked me.

"But—oh, *Con*, I'm dying!"

Con conquered the choking and enveloped her with his arms. "No," he said strongly and calmly. "God won't take you from me. He never gave me much, and he'll give me you. Won't he, Mr. Burton?"

"I believe he will, Con," I said.

"I believe it, too, Con," said the girl. "Somehow I feel it inside."

I married them that night.

Mary was always fragile. But with the Sundays in the park, sufficient food and clothing, rest, content, she seemed to be getting better all the time. But, I think, she was only happier. They planned hungrily for their happiness, as if otherwise some moment of it might be overlooked and lost. But the most curious of their plans were for its ending.

"I want to die first, Con," said Mary. "I would n't want to live without you."

"Well, how about me living without you?" Con would object.

"Oh, you're bigger 'n me, Con," his wife would laugh. "Anyway, I'll be ugly when I git old. Then you'd stop liking me."

"You'd feel kind of strange up there without no parents or friends. I'll go first and stand at the gate with my mother and watch for you," urged her husband.

"I'd know your mother, Con, from you; and I'll look out for her. Then we could wait for you! Would n't that be nice?" She leaned over and whis-

pered so that I might not hear. "Con, if we have—when we have—the *baby*, I 'll leave you that—for comfort, *Con!*"

Con gathered her into his arms with rapture.

"All nonsense," he chided. "We both goin' to be old—old—old! Then God 's going to let us go together. That often happens to very old people. Sh! I 'm a-goin' to sing you to sleep!"

And then his marvelous voice would rise in

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly!

For it was that nearly always.

Then I missed Con from his car, and at the company's office they told me he was in prison for stealing. I went to the prison.

"Con," I said, "I want only your word. Tell me whether you have done anything wrong?"

"Will *you* take my word?" asked the boy. "*They* would n't."

"I want nothing but your word," I said.

"I have done nothing wrong since my mother died."

I believed him. I do still.

"Tell Mary," he begged, "that I am innocent. They can't convict an innocent man. I will soon be home—tell her that!"

"She does not need to be told that you are innocent," I said; "but I will go and comfort her."

But I did not tell her that Con would soon be home.

And again there was that light in the upper window of the little house in the little street where the sun

never came. Again there was watching there—now for him who was to come no more.

You will scarcely understand how grim and brief and passionless was his trial. It seemed impossible that the judges should not know that the tragedy of this young life was going on before them to a hopeless end—nay, that the tragedy of those other lives in the little sunless house was going on to a hopeless end.

Hell itself is not more grim and implacable than the thing we have created and called law—than the men we have set over us and called judges! Sometimes we even call them justices—who do injustice. Oh, better indeed that a thousand guilty escape than that one suffer innocently! For with him humanity—the world—suffers, and justice, which is of God alone, becomes a lie! Ah, perhaps it is true that laws are made for the poor and *law* for the rich. For Con there was not even an advocate. Alas! we both thought that innocence needed none!

“Con,” I said, “be not afraid. He careth for you.”

The boy lifted up from his travail a face almost glorified.

“I am not,” he answered with a wan smile. “I have my mother’s Book in my breast here.”

And, indeed, it did not seem as if he need to be afraid. There stood an array of his washerwomen—all his friends. There were the children he loved and who loved him.

But the former were made to tell that they paid no fares, and the latter that the good conductor gave them money out of the pocket where the much money was.

The jury laughed here, and the trial might have

ended. But the children were cajoled into telling with their little raptures about the lovely lady who lived up the alley.

"Of course," smiled the district attorney to the jury ;
"always a confederate."

"Used to work, did n't she? And gave up her work after she met the conductor?"

Yes, the little children said, and told, besides, about her beautiful clothes afterward.

Again the jury and the prosecutor exchanged smiles.

Then came the informers who had traveled with my poor Con and noted all his acts of kindness but to make of them crimes. Oh, I did not know till then that kindness and mercy and sweetness could be so perilous!

And even I who tried to help him was made to tell of that life in Alaska Street, but not permitted to tell of the other.

I said that Con was married to Mary. It made them laugh—I do not know why. To be married to her seemed all the worse for him. I said that Con paid the fares of the washerwomen and children—unknown to them.

"Did you ever see him do it?" asked the prosecutor.

I had to say that I never had, but that Con told me so and I believed him.

"You, a minister of the gospel, believed an often-convicted thief, whose picture is in the rogues' gallery?"

"Yes," I answered ; "I, knowing all that better than you, yet believe every word he said!"

"Why?" smiled the officer of the law.

"Because he is a servant of the Most High God," I answered.

And they laughed!

Then came Con's story in his own behalf. And what a broken, pitiable, discreditable story it was! Every little fact about that other life he told with fearful truth. But about his new life they made him stand mute.

The jury found him guilty without leaving their seats, and the court sentenced him and turned with relief to other business.

So Con was taken back to the prison he had said, with God's help, he would enter no more. The kind warden remembered that, and when he came he put his arm caressingly over the boy's shoulder and said:

"They ought to have given you a chance, Con."

To me the warden said:

"There is something different in his face this time. We learn to read faces here. There is something different in his face."

"And in his heart," said I. "We learn to read hearts, and there is something different in his heart. Be kind to the boy, and God will be kind to you. For he ought not to have come here this time."

As the iron door clanged to behind him Con said:

"Tell Mary—I 'm—I 'm—disappointed."

Those two words characterized the grim tragedy of his young life. His quivering face spoke the rest. Always it will speak to me when I am impatient with wrong.

Con languished in that prison where before he had grown fat. He made shoes, and they tell me they

were good shoes—as was everything else he did good. But after a while a strange and solemn peace came and dwelt in his face; and not a soul in the prison but loved the boy. At first I did not understand it. But one day Con told me. He knew now, he said, why God had let that jury convict him. There was a work for him to do in the prison. And I was only too glad to say yes—yes—yes!

He began his work with that marvelous voice. And that, too, like his changed face, grew richly and divinely sweet and caressing. It seems to me that I have never heard its equal. It was something more than human. I cannot describe it. It sang of that past of the slums—of his vain redemption, of the little sunless house, and yet of hope, of promise, of God and heaven!

First he sang one night when the prison slept. The warden tiptoed to his door to say that it was against the rules. But he also said he was sorry—and the rule was broken. For the warden told the inspectors that when Con sang the prison needed no guards. So every night he sang when the lights were taken away. And this was all the gentleness some of the prisoners had ever known.

Later they brought him out to stand on the high bridge between the tiers of cells and sing at the Sunday services.

It was not strange to me that Con came to minister to them, after a while, in a fashion the chaplain could not. For he was one of them. He had sinned and suffered as they had. He understood, they said. And they loved him. Truly he bore their griefs and carried

their sorrows, even to the grim scaffold which stood now and then in the lower corridor, veiled from the world.

Last Monday Mary sent for me. She was dying.

"And Con, even if he were here, could not save me—*now*," she smiled up at me.

I sent a mounted officer galloping with a note to the kind warden, and the officer brought Con up with him.

Mary heard the noise at the door, and understood. She reached out and pressed my hand.

"Yes," I said; "it is Con."

"Yes—God bless you—"

And then Con entered. But not the impetuous Con who had come at such a crisis before. There was something of the saint in his bearing, yet something infinitely more like a lover than before. He put himself within Mary's outstretched arms and looked long and silently into her face. She looked into his. They needed nothing more. They had not met for nearly a year.

"Con," whispered Mary, "last night I dreamed that you stopped for me and said in the old, old way: 'Going up?'"

"Yes," whispered Con.

"Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"You can't save me *now*, Con—not even your love can."

"No," said Con.

"And I'm so glad!—that I am going first, you know. 'Going up?' Oh, how happy we were! It is enough

—to be happy 'most a year, don't you think? Poor Con! You won't be here when I go up; they'll take you back—back—”

“To the prison.”

She would not say it, but Con did.

“Poor Con! Poor old Con! *Darling!* I have been so happy! I 'm not afraid, Con dear, for you won't be long. I can see it by your dear face. How strange and beautiful it has become! I always thought you beautiful, but now—what is it, Con?”

“God's love,” said Con.

“God's love!” she whispered to herself. “I'll wait for you—with the baby—and both the mothers—by the gate, Con—right by the gate. Don't pass us by. Con darling, kiss me—*yes*, that-a-way. We'll never git tired of waiting. But don't be long. It can't be quite heaven without you. Con, there are no jails up there. Nor any wrong—or mistakes—God is there! and he—understands! Kiss me—again—and again—and again—*darling!* Con—your head is white—your—face shines. Con—good-by—good-by till—we meet—by—the gate—”

For the officer had come to take Con back to the prison.

And then yesterday they brought Con up again to the little house in the little street where you know there was no sunshine, to stand for the last time by the side of his wife and baby. He stooped within the coffin to whisper something, as if they could hear. Then he kissed the roses on the coffin-lid and knelt there gazing into the face of his wife while I read

those compassionate Scriptures for the living whose loved have died :

“Man that is born of a woman
Is of few days, and full of trouble.
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down :
He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.
Man is like to vanity :
His days are as a shadow that passeth away.
His days are as grass ;
As a flower of the field, so he perisheth.
For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone ;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
He hath not dealt with us after our sins,
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.
For he knoweth our frame ;
He remembereth that we are dust.”

Some trembling voice began to sing :

Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly !

The old song !

The hearse drove noisily to the door. They took up the coffin. With a mighty sob Con snatched a rose. They stopped pityingly that he might look once more, —that he might kiss the black cabinet which held her dust who had given him all the brief happiness he had known,—and then they went their separate ways : Con to the prison—Mary and her babe to the grave.

Dearly beloved, receive the benediction : *May the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be upon you, and abide with you, now and evermore. Amen.*



THE ATONEMENT



THE ATONEMENT

I

"AFTER TAKING"

WHEN, finally, he woke from the trance of illness, he fancied that the strange girl at his bedside knew all about it, and took up the affair with the specious gaiety which is pitiful in that it never deceives. It did not deceive her. She knew at once that he had been deeply hurt. She admitted promptly that she knew. But it was not with his lightness. There was a look out of a pair of marvelous young eyes straight into his own which shamed him. He tried to be a little less oblique about it. But it was embarrassing. What attitude, he asked himself, whimsically, is a rejected suitor to take? Especially when circumstances have made both the fact that he has been rejected, and that it has hurt, public?

Later the girl with the great gray eyes placed in his hands a little volume of clippings relating to the affair of the rescue. They were carefully gummed between illuminated borders. The front cover fancifully illustrated the fire, and the back was gay with a

bunch of poppies. Facing the clippings there was a newspaper portrait of him, washed in with water-colors. It was so evidently the work of some one who had not yet been entirely rescued from things childish that he expected her to smile when she handed it to him. But she did not. When he looked up there was the same straight look from the eyes—with a little questioning in them now. Suddenly it occurred to him that she had done it. Then, after another look upward, he was sure she had. He meant to go on with her as if he understood that. He pointed to the apocryphal portrait and said smilingly :

“As I ought to be, I suppose, not as I am.”

Now, as he looked up, the gray eyes were veiled by their lids.

“No,” she said, “not as you are. But they told me it was quite like you before. And I was glad of that; I preferred to have it as you were before.”

“Thanks,” said the sick man; “so should I.”

His tones were as full of irony as a sick man’s may be.

“Are you angry?” asked the girl.

She looked quickly up, and he caught the alarm in her voice—felt its little vibrations. She perceived this, and the red shot from her throat to her forehead.

“Who was so good as to tell you that?” he asked.

“Miss Hilliard,” answered the girl.

“Her opinion is of the greatest value.”

The girl did not understand that this was mere bitterness.

“Yes,” she said quite simply.

The man smiled.

"Here is the 'Before Taking.' Now will you not give me the 'After Taking'?"

She did not understand. He tapped the volume on the bed.

"Why do I not look like that now?"

She examined him a moment.

"I do not know—exactly. But there is a great scar across your forehead. There are a number of smaller ones. And your hair has not yet grown. But there is something else. I think it is something spiritual. It is as if you had learned afterward to mock at things. It is difficult to explain how that shows in a face or a portrait. But I see it. The scars will not make much difference. When they are healed you will look quite like my portrait—if it were not for that. And—" she waited an appreciable instant before she concluded, and then she did so haltingly—"and I hope—that will—pass—away."

He could not see her eyes then, and her voice had sunk almost to a whisper. And he was surprised to find something queer rising in his throat. With a boyish impulse he reached out and caught her hand. It was a very pretty hand—he could feel that much. But she shyly withdrew it.

"You are a serious little person—and a shy one," he laughed ruefully.

He saw at once that he had struck a false note. She turned her back and walked to the window. He pursued her with his mood of half-bitterness again:

"You have n't told me a thing. Yet I know that you have been very good to me."

"How do you know that?" she asked, with her slender back still toward him.

"I should otherwise be dead."

She faced him quickly. Something between anger and reproach dyed her face. But then it resumed its paleness, and she turned back to the window.

"But I am going to reward you—" the man went on.

"I do not wish to be rewarded," she broke in as he paused.

"By getting well very quickly and going away," he finished.

The girl said nothing; but presently he could see her put her handkerchief surreptitiously to her eyes.

"I am a brute," he said savagely. "Pardon me. And will you not come here?"

She did not turn.

"I am going to leave you alone for a little while, if you don't mind."

"Yes. But first tell me who you are."

"I would rather not—just now," begged the girl.

He hesitated a moment—surprised again to find the troublesome lump in his throat. Then, when he spoke, his voice betrayed him.

"All right. I do not deserve it."

She instantly turned and came toward the bed. He could see the moisture still in her eyes.

"I am Helen Vernon," she said.

"Miss Hilliard's cousin!"

"Yes," said the girl.

"I see," said the sick man, turning away.

"She did *not* send me," the girl defended. "I came myself. You needed some one—who—who cared."

Though she faltered she said it bravely.

"And you cared?"

The girl hesitated. Then she said quietly:

"Yes."

"But why?"

Again she hesitated; and her distress was more evident.

"I don't know."

"She suggested it—in atonement?"

"It was—against her wishes."

"But it *was* in atonement?"

"I must leave you now," she said busily.

"Don't be cruel; be frank."

He caught her hand as she endeavored to pass.

"That would be cruel—very," she said, looking at him straightly.

He suddenly and spiritlessly let her hand go. It dropped nervelessly at her side. She lingered now, in a state of some embarrassment.

"You do not understand," the girl ventured.

He looked up with a half-smile.

"It was not as you think. You were cruel to her. It was for pity of her I came."

"Me! Cruel! To *her*!"

II

HOW HEROES ARE MADE—IN THE NEWSPAPERS

His amazement brought him upright in the bed.

"You would not permit her to come near you."

"Di-did she—try?" gasped the sick man.

"Yes—very—hard," breathed the girl. "It was—pitiful! She was so sorry—and she wished to—oh, do you not understand?"

"No," said the sick man, hoarsely, relapsing upon the pillows. "I was—I must have been delirious."

"Yes," said the girl, quietly, "or you could not have been so cruel. You cursed her! You said you never wished to see her face again."

"And then—she—"

"She stopped trying."

"I don't remember," he repeated; "I was—I must have been—"

"Yes, you were delirious. But you knew it was she."

The sick man's hands gripped each other under the covers.

"When—is she to be married?" he asked.

The girl hesitated before delivering the blow.

"She *is* married."

The sick man gulped pitifully upon something in his throat. The hands clenched a little tighter.

"That 's—all—right," he said.

The girl completed what she seemed to think he ought to know rapidly.

"She, too, was ill afterward. They were married at once and went abroad. They are in Paris now. You have been ill longer than you think."

"Yes," said the man, trying to smile up at her. Then, to make her think, if he could, that he had dismissed the matter: "Will you kindly read me the most flattering of those clippings? I should like to

know what I did to deserve such fame. Ah, but pardon me; you must go, I think you said."

The girl flushed. Then the strange, serious look—which seemed so much too old for her face—came back.

"I should like to read the clippings," she said very softly.

"Thank you," said the sick man.

And the word said so much more than print can express! He wanted her to stay, and wanted her so much more than he thought she could fancy. He was reaching out to her—out of a vast chaos of emptiness and hopelessness which had suddenly opened about him when her words had swept the comfort of cynicism away. She seemed all there was in the world just then of kindness and goodness. But for her he felt shudderingly alone and outcast. He looked at her as she read for him. Only a little girl! But if she chose to be sympathetic—kind—should he refuse, no matter what the motive? She was very pretty as she read. With her head bent that way he could see the top of her head with its crown of brown hair. Her eyes looked as if they were closed at that angle. The lashes swept luxuriantly over her cheeks. All the face was rounded with the charm of adolescence. And her voice was what an older woman's should be—he could easily fancy what it would be a little later.

She closed the book and looked up. Something still in his face, dreamily, hopelessly, longingly, made her flush again and suddenly rise.

"What a fraud you have all permitted me to become!" he laughed presently.

The girl quickly returned to him.

"Is it not true?" she questioned.

"Do I look like a hero?"

"No," said the girl, with a half-sigh; "the mockery has come back to your face."

The man laughed. There was a certain comforting bravado in the fact.

"No man is hero to his nurse. I wish very much to retain your regard. If I assume that rôle now I could not live up to it later. Then—"

The girl stirred uneasily, and he had the consciousness that she was resenting this. Curiously, he was glad that he could give her pain. He went on with a queer grimness:

"It is quite true that I proposed to your cousin on 'the fatal night,' to speak by the book, and that my successful rival is Mr. Haney, the brewer. It is not true, as you know, I believe, that he is illiterate and vulgar. Your cousin would never choose such a man under even more trying circumstances. Haney is a gentleman, a college grad, and an altogether good fellow. He is a much better fellow than I. Therefore the wisdom of your cousin's choice is apparent. I heartily approve of it. The rest is better guessing. I was sleeping when the knowledge somehow reached me that my neighbor's house was afire. I dressed, and descended the scuttle of the said house, with the sole idea of being useful. I had the good fortune to stumble over your cousin, and carried her out. I had to get out myself, and it would have been excessively impolite to leave her behind. That was all."

"Not all," said the girl, following the clippings. "You said you would save her or die with her."

The sick man smiled and shook his head.

"But *did* you?" asked the girl, with some vehemence.

"I did not," said the man.

She read a little further, then said:

"But you did take off your own coat and wrap it around her head to save her hair?"

"It was a blanket from the servant's bed," he laughed again, "and it was to save her head."

"But this is true. It was seen to have occurred. 'Her arms were found to be so closely locked about him that it was only with the greatest difficulty they were separated. And when this was accomplished she moaned pitifully and begged to go back to him.'"

"I have no recollection of any such theatrical performance."

"Of course not," said the girl; "you were unconscious."

"Oh, was I?"

He took the book from her, and, for a moment, examined the pretty hands.

"Why do you wish to go away?" asked the girl, shyly.

"Don't you think that it is better?" he challenged.

"No; I should think you would wish to be with your friends—at—such a time."

"What kind of a time?"

Her face grew furiously red.

"At a time of—of—misfortune."

"That's why I wish to go."

She looked up misunderstandingly.

"Do you want me to remain longer a subject for—pity?"

It was a long time before she spoke.

"No," she said then; "*pity* is odious!"

She passed softly out and closed the door.

But the getting away was more easy in theory than in practice. He had overestimated his strength, and had a relapse. When he spoke of going again, the girl leaned over him winningly and said:

"Don't try again, please, till you are quite sure—until the doctor—"

She smiled the rest, and his eyes followed her glance out of the window.

"What is it you always see out there—after I have been brutal to you?"

She turned upon him, still smiling, but showing some surprise.

"Nothing!"

And then she laughed.

"Nothing?" questioned the invalid.

"I don't think I know exactly what is over there," the girl admitted.

"Why," complained the sick man, "it's a brick wall!"

"Yes, I believe it is," consented the nurse.

"I am glad we have become better friends," said the invalid.

"Yes," breathed the girl, with emotion.

But presently the day came to say good-by. And he was suddenly conscious how awkwardly he was doing it—and how much better she was.

"Why, hang it all!" he laughed suddenly, "I—I

believe I'm going to cry. Hurry or it will be too late to save me! Yes—may I kiss you?"

She put up her lips and closed her eyes. But her face was shudderingly cold when he touched it.

He held her a moment.

"You are cold," he said softly.

She swayed toward him and then suddenly back. In a moment she stiffened and opened her eyes. They had in them a strange wild look of agony.

"I wish you a safe—journey," she said.

She began steadily, but her voice broke a little at the end.

Something leaped up in the breast of the man, and he came toward her.

"Nell," he began, "shall I stay here?"

But she turned and ran from him.

"Came near being an ass," said the man, bitterly, turning away.

III

THE BLOND CAPILLARIES

HE had some further medical assistance in London, and later he met an acquaintance who recognized him quite readily, and who assured him that his scars had nearly disappeared.

"They do some clever skin-grafting over here," said his friend.

"That was done in America."

"Oh! Well, they were good enough to give you a

better skin than you had before." He came close and inspected it. "Much finer." Then he pulled out a pocket microscope and put it on the scar. He laughed. "But, I say, the person who supplied the fresh tissue was blond. It will never be a matter of any consequence, but the capillaries in the new skin are blond, while yours are dark!"

When Garford got home he looked at the scar carefully. It was on the forehead, just under his own hair. What his medical friend had said was true. The down on the transplanted skin was quite blond. However, it would never show, and he laughed a little, and thought how he would revile the doctor about it when he got back to America. And then suddenly, with the word, an immense nostalgia seized him. America! It was overpowering. He tried to sleep it off, but without the least success. And the next day the girl he had found at his bedside got into his head once more, somehow, and stayed there. He raised the hair from his forehead and looked at his scar in the glass.

"I have been going about the world thinking that nobody in it cares for me. Yet here is some one who has cared for me sufficiently to suffer physical pain for me. And I have never had the grace to ask who it was! Some poor devil of a hospital attendant, no doubt, who has never had a dollar for it. Well, the moment I reach America I shall inquire who it was—and then—" He looked a little closer. "It *is* finer than my own skin. I wonder who? Good God, it may have been a child—a child from the slums! I've heard of such things." He shuddered. "After all,

it's uncanny to think that you have a part of some one else's body patched upon your own! I wonder I never thought of it before! I'm going home to find out. It's horrible! Yet, stop! What would be the good of finding out? It could not be undone. And I might find the person—unclean."

He strode up and down the room for the next ten minutes. "Better stay away," he ended.

And he fought the nostalgia and the demon of the scar for another year. But then it had grown too strong for him.

"I have got to go and find him. I must see him, at least. There is no use in going on in this way. I must know something about him."

IV

WHAT RENT SHOULD ONE PAY FOR A PATCH OF SKIN?

HE went straight to the house of Nell Vernon. He meant to despatch the whole matter in a few words. But she staggered him when he saw her. She was a woman now.

"And a royal one!" he thought as she approached him down the stairway.

She welcomed him with a charming self-possession, yet with something quite as unworldly as if she had not "grown up."

"I came to see you first," he said, with an abashed irrelevancy which surprised him.

"Of course," smiled Nell. "Did n't you promise when you went away—"

"Before I went away," he corrected.

"Yes!" laughed Nell. "When you went we did n't have much to say. Do you remember it?"

"Yes!" said he, with curious savagery.

"So do I."

"Is that *all* you remember?" he asked.

"Y-es," she said, turning to the window. Thence she returned in a moment with that curiously straight look in her eyes.

"I came to find out," he said then, abruptly, "who supplied the skin which was grafted here."

He raised the hair and exposed the scar.

The girl's eyes drooped a little.

"Why?" she asked then.

"I—I want to pay him. It is bad enough to be carrying about with you a patch of somebody else's body, let alone to be owing a couple of years' rent for it. Who was it? I was under the influence of ether. But you know."

"I—I am not sure," faltered the girl, "that I know. Was—was it a man?"

"No. I think it must have been a child. That makes it all the more horrible—to owe one's life to a child. That a child should be crippled in that way to save my worthless carcass!"

Nell had grown pale.

"Look! Don't you think it must have been the skin of a child?"

She shrank away.

"I—I cannot look at it—please!"

"Pardon me," he said more easily. "I really did not think how brutal that was. I'll see the doctor about it."

A sudden alarm energized the girl.

"No, no; I do not think he knows. I'm sure he does not. I got—got—the person. I think I can find out who it was. I—I'll try—and then—then you can give me the money to—to pay him."

"Money cannot pay him. But he is to have that, since I can give him nothing else!"

To his surprise, she suddenly sobbed.

She looked up presently and said:

"I'm very sorry—but at the mere thought—my—my nerves—" She tried to smile then through her wet eyelashes, and Garford fled from them. It was the nurse all over again. And, even as it was, he saw that smile for days. He was too frightened to go again at once, but every day or two would send some message. But something in him wanted to go there after all, and finally he drifted back. And then—After that they were always together. But their intimacy did not grow. He had built up somewhere a stone wall against it.

V

SHE SENT HIM TO NELL—THEN SOBBED!

He took lodgings in one of the tall apartment-houses which had been built in his absence, and resumed such of his intimacies as he considered un-

broken. There were few enough of these. But among them, for some reason not quite plain to him, he had chosen to consider those concerning the man whom Miss Hilliard had married. He told himself that it was only because he was a thoroughly good fellow; but he could not have been sure that this was the only reason.

"Wants to see how hard he was hit," remarked a clubman.

"Or see how badly she's hit," answered another.

"Simply a new style of revenge," said a third.

"To see whether they are living happily ever after," added a fourth.

At all events, it resulted in a new and surprisingly pleasant friendship with the woman who had jilted him. Garford was amazed to find how impersonal and frank their intimacy at once became.

"I guess neither of us was badly hurt," he said to himself, guiltily, as he went home one night.

"Do you know," she said, with her frank smile, as she sat on the other side of the tea-table one afternoon and leaned her elbows prettily on it, "that I have been wondering ever since you came back what you thought of me—"

"Madam, I thought you knew," said her guest, "before I went away."

"Oh, if it's going to be sir and madam— Will you have some more tea?"

"No," he laughed; "I don't deserve it."

"I meant, you know," she said, putting the pot back on its hook, "whether you found me changed—much."

"Not much—a little older," he said.

"The same to you, ungallant sir!" she retorted.

"No," he said, "not the same. I am very much older."

"Oh!" she repented softly. But she did not deny it.

"You see, I am gray at the temples."

"Yes," she said, with an entire change of manner. She was looking down and twisting a curious ring around her finger.

"Clever workmanship," he said.

She looked quickly up.

"The ring."

Something fled across her face, and she hid the hand.

"Oh," he laughed, "is it as bad as that?"

"I see you recognize it," she said.

"I? No. I never saw it before. I was only admiring the cunning of the artificer who made it."

"Yes," she said; "it was a cunning artificer."

"Who was it?"

"Fire," she answered, looking straightly at him.

"Ah! then it is Truth, not Fiction?"

"You ought to know," said the woman, rising.

Suddenly he understood. It was the ring he had offered her the night of the fire. It had been partially melted. She saw that he knew.

"Are you displeased that I wear it?"

"Not I," he said lightly. "I suppose you mortify your soul with it when you are naughty. You are naughty sometimes?"

"Yes," she answered humbly.

He felt a sudden aversion to the incident, and took up his hat to go. But she was plainly unwilling that he should do this.

"Do—do you wish it back?"

He stared.

"The ring."

"Not I," he laughed. "I have no use for such a thing nowadays."

"I wish you would not say that," the woman murmured.

"Oh! Well, then, I won't."

But his laughter was unpleasant.

Again he tried to go, but she detained him.

"Oh," she suddenly pleaded, "do not make it so hard for me!"

"Hard—hard?" he said bewilderedly. "I do not understand."

"No!" She closed her teeth and went on: "Men never do. I sent for you to-day to tell you—tell you that the happiness of another—so dear—so very dear to me!—depends upon whether you understand or not. And you are making it so hard—so hard for me! Have you no mercy?"

The man staggered away in some sort of fear to the door-post.

"No; don't do that—don't look at me that way. We are friends now—*friends*. And yet it is so hard to speak plainly. Can you not guess what I would say? No!"

She suddenly dropped her arms at her side. Then, as suddenly:

"May I look at the scar on your forehead?"

He nodded; and she led him to the light and lifted the hair.

"Yes," she smiled; "I can tell you now. Where one has suffered for another—"

Suddenly he understood.

"Who—who," he cried, "has suffered for me? I came home to find him. Who—who is he? Nothing I can give shall be too much. I didn't know—I didn't know till they told me on the other side. Who has given part of his very body—crippling it that mine might be whole?"

"No! Men are so blind! I made you so unhappy—once—oh, so unhappy! And happiness is so sweet and so rare that you will, I think, pardon me for having sought this opportunity to make you happy.

"I see you with Nell always, always—and know that you do not even guess how it all is. Can you not see that, if she was a child when you went away, she is a woman now? And oh, there is no one in all the world like her! She has tenderness and sweetness infinite—and it is all for you. She has lived and modeled herself as she thinks you would have her. And she has waited for you to come for her. She has never doubted that you would—*until you did*. She has kept for you the lips you never even asked her to keep. Because you kissed them last. You might have kissed them when you came. But, instead, you gave her nothing but your hands! She suffered to patch that scar, as you say. It was agony, but she did it for you. The scar is there now—under her hair at her neck—and she is very proud of it! She has thought you a demigod. That was all wrong; for I

knew you to be only a man. But she is a woman now, as I was then, and you are breaking her heart. She loves you—and you are her first love! Think of that. All that sweet heart—”

Garford had sunk into a chair.

“But,” the woman went on softly, “*I* knew—*I* understood. You see, I am so much older and wiser now. And I sent for you that I might tell you. Men are so blind—so blind!”

Garford slowly rose. He tried to smile, but his eyes were suffused.

“Yes,” he said, “you have found me out; I thought I had it all so well concealed. I thought it too impossible even to dream of. I knew that she was very kind; but I fancied it was still her pity—she used to *pity* me.”

“Pity! She never pitied you! She loved you then. She has always loved you—even when I—”

She suddenly halted.

“What shall I do?” asked Garford, taking the hands she let fall.

“Go—now—now—and ask her to be your wife. And tell—her—tell her—that *I*—that *I* sent you!”

He was going.

“And God bless you!” she said after him.

And then—when he was quite gone—she buried her face in the pillow of the couch and suddenly sobbed.



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